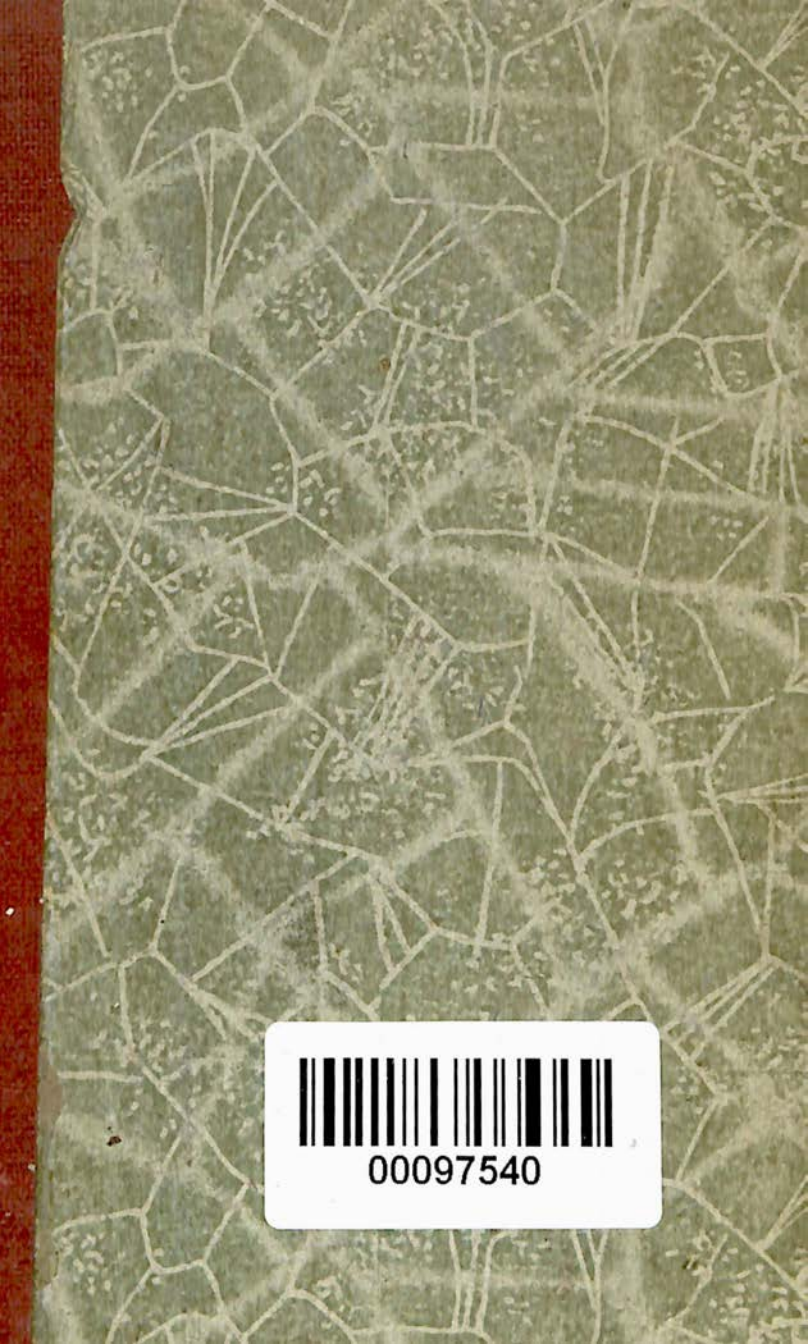
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MATTINS AND MUTTON'S:

THE BEAUTY OF BRIGHTON.

A Love Story.

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BY

CUTHBERT BEDE,

AUTHOR OF "VERDANT GREEN" "SHARPE AND DARKER;" ETC. ETC. ETC.

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MATTINS AND MUTTON'S;

OR,

THE BEAUTY OF BRIGHTON.

CHAPTER I.

AN INCIPIENT CASE.

"I CANNOT imagine, my dear Helen, what has been the matter with you this last month or two," said Mrs. Melladew, breaking the silence that had reigned for nearly an hour in the comfortable morning-room of Melladew Manor, whither the mother and daughter had retired after their luncheon.

"With me, mamma?" said the young lady addressed as Helen. She was very comfortably ensconced in one of those large and luxuriously-padded chairs that modern ease has created for its languid loungers. A book was resting in her lap; and, through the open window close beside

her, she could not only look out upon the pleasant scenery of the park and the distant country, steeped in the full glories of summer sunshine, but she could also enjoy such refreshing coolness as might be afforded by the open window and its position at a shady corner of the house. The purple breadth of shadow was flung athwart the lawn that led up to the morning-room window; but beyond it there were blazing beds of scarlet geraniums and crimson verbenas, that seemed all aglow with July fire, and were almost too dazzling for the eye to rest upon. Perhaps it was to shade her eyes from these brilliant blossoms that the young lady rested her forehead upon the hand that was nearest to the window, the while her other hand listlessly turned over the leaves of her book. "With me, mamma?" she said, in reply to her mother.

"Yes, with you, my dear. You are getting to look quite dejected and miserable, a perfect what's-its-name — misanthrope, and so absent and *distraite*. You have not spoken a word to me for the last hour."

"Oh, mamma! what a dreadful charge to make against poor me, when you know I'm such a chat-

terbox," said the young lady, gaily. "I had compassion upon you for once, and let you enjoy an hour's quiet; and I saw that you were as busy with your work as I was with my book."

"Busy with your book!" exclaimed the matron of the manor; "why, my dear Helen, you have scarcely turned over a leaf—though I wish that you would turn over another leaf——"

"Now, mamma, that's a pun."

"And not waste your time on senseless novels, when there are so many other books with which you could improve your time. I was noticing only this morning that you had not even cut the leaves of that new edition of 'Alison's History,' in which I am sure that you would find far more solid reading than in those Mudie tales."

"It is rather too solid reading for whiling away an hour until school-time comes," pleaded the young lady.

But this plea was not of much service to her, inasmuch as it reminded her mother of the head and front of her offending. "There again, my dear Helen; I must say that I think you have taken to visiting the schools much more than is needful for a young lady in your position. Once

or twice a week would be quite sufficient for a call there, and to show that you take an interest in them, without going there as regularly as though you were a paid assistant or a pupil-teacher. You should remember your position, and that you are the sister of the squire of the parish."

"It is because I do not forget that fact that I conceive it to be my especial duty to do all that I can for the well-being of the cottagers on the squire's estate." And the young lady spoke very seriously; though she added, in a lighter tone, "You surely are not afraid of anything infectious, dear mamma? Every one was vaccinated in the spring; Mr. Johnson took good care of that."

"And quite right too; it was his duty, as the parish doctor, to do so," replied Mrs. Melladew. "But I cannot see the necessity for such constant school-visiting. Your brother pays a mistress to see to all that; and although Mrs. Mudge is somewhat in years, yet I am sure that her old-fashioned method of teaching and communicating what will be of real use to cottagers' children in their after life is infinitely preferable to the nonsensical accomplishments that are taught by those upstart young lady mistresses from colleges. It was only

the other day, when I asked Sarah Jinks why she had taken Mary away from our school and sent her two miles off to that stuck-up Miss Curzon's school, that she gave as a reason that Miss Curzon taught 'the croshering.' And, though she could not tell me what 'the croshering' was, or whether it would be of any advantage to her child, yet, solely to please Miss Mary's whims, she removed her from Mrs. Mudge, who could have shown her how to make shirts and to knit stockings—knowledge that, I daresay, is thought far too common to be taught by a certificated mistress from a college. Thank goodness, Mrs. Mudge is not under government inspection!"

"Poor old woman! if she were, she would never survive it!" and Helen laughed at the very idea of so terrible a catastrophe befalling the old village schoolmistress. "But I am sure, dear mamma, that you need not suspect me of trying to supplant old Mudge by any of the new lights, or of attempting, in her old age, to revolutionize her system of instruction. She jogs on in her old way very comfortably and satisfactorily; still, without any vanity, I really think that I can make myself useful both to her and the children."

"Yes, I have no objection to that," replied her mother; "but the last few months you have been overdoing it, and I am sure that it is undermining your health and telling upon your system. It was only this morning, when Mr. Johnson came to see the laundry-maid, that I took the opportunity of speaking to him about you; and he said that your system wanted tone."

"Tone!" echoed Helen Melladew; "fiddlesticks! or rather fiddle, for he seems to speak of me as though I were a musical instrument. While he was about it, he should have been a little more poetical, and likened me to sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh. Tone indeed! my dear mamma, old Pillbox is little better than an old woman."

Mrs. Melladew was quite shocked by so flippant a speech, and at once interposed on the slandered doctor's behalf. "My dear Helen, you need not speak in that slighting way of a very respectable country surgeon, in whom your poor papa reposed such confidence, and for whose opinion he had great regard. I am sure that Mr. Johnson's advice is quite worth taking, and he perfectly agreed with me in thinking——"

"As a matter of course," murmured Miss Melladew.

"That there was something amiss with you; and, in short, that your system wanted tone. You are really beginning to look quite thin. I could not help noticing your neck when you wore your new pink grenadine the other evening at the Hawleys. And you are positively becoming paler and losing your country colour. I do not wish to put a stop to your school-visiting, or to any other work of usefulness proper to a young lady in your sphere; I only wish to put a check upon it, for I do think that of late you have been greatly overdoing the matter. If Mrs. Mudge stands in need of help, I'm sure that she receives it from the curate, Mr. What's-his-name?"

"Ansley! my dear mamma, you never can remember it!" said Helen Melladew, as she rose from her lounging chair, in which she had been far more buried than in the book which she now laid aside. The purple breadth of shadow just without the window had crept over a wider belt of lawn as the hot sun was declining from its meridian; but there was scarcely the tiniest breeze to stir a leaf in the sultry atmosphere. As she

mentioned the curate's name, she stood with her back to her mother, and looked towards the blazing beds of geraniums on the lawn, her cheeks flushing somewhat with a faint reflection of their hue. The roses bloomed there now, despite her mother's fears that she was losing her country colour.

"Ansley!" echoed Mrs. Melladew; "of course. But I never can remember names, though I am sure that I ought to have remembered this gentleman's name, if it was only on account of the Mountnorris Annesleys. At first, as you remember, we fancied that he was related to them; but when we knew how he spelt his name, of course it made all the difference. I ought not to forget Mr. Ansley's name, for he must have been with us nearly a year."

"Nearly two," said Helen, promptly, but with her back to her mother. "He was ordained priest last Michaelmas."

"Dear me! how quickly the time passes, and what a retentive memory you have, my dear!" Helen blushed; perhaps at the compliment. "It is quite a gift, and you inherit it from your father; my memory was always wretched. Nearly two

years! dear me! why it seems but the other day that he made his first call here, and I quite imagined him to belong to the Mountnorris Annesleys, until after he had gone away, and I had had an opportunity to look at his card, when I must say that I was greatly surprised—very greatly surprised—to see the *n e* omitted."

"Which, I fear, made him sink in your estimation."

"Well, I don't know about that, Helen," replied her mother. "But I think that people ought not to go about with names that sound like other people's names, and yet are spelt quite differently. It really seems to me quite like an imposition." Mrs. Melladew chafed over it, as though Mr. Ansley had been guilty of a deliberate deception, and was walking about seeking whom he might beguile to accept him as a genuine Mountnorris Annesley. The young lady was mightily amused at the novel light thrown upon the curate's claims to a social standing; but she discreetly held her tongue, knowing her mother's propensity to make a grievance of any matter in which she fancied herself to have been deceived. And this was not the first by many times that she

had referred in similar terms to the spelling of Mr. Ansley's name.

"However, as regards the school," said Mrs. Melladew, when she had recovered her usual serene frame of mind and manner, "I am sure that if Mrs. Mudge needs help—which I very much doubt, with those three eldest girls to help her in the classes—it will be given her by Mr. Ansley. Despite his name—which I cannot but help regarding as unfortunate—he seems an estimable young man, and willing to do his duty in the parish; and, as it is a part of his duty to see after the school, I think you might be content to leave it to him."

"But," said the younger lady, with her face still turned from her mother, and the rosy glow upon her cheeks still flashing back somewhat of the sunny brightness of the flowers, "there are certain things in a school that a lady can see to so much better than a gentleman—sewing, for example; and I don't suppose that Mr. Ansley's knowledge extends to hemming and the mysteries of gussets. And this reminds me that it is quite time to go and see to these things, or Phœbe Fletcher will not have finished her father's new shirts by Christmas."

"Stay a moment, my dear," said Mrs. Melladew; "I wanted to mention to you that I was thinking of going to the sea-side; somewhere on the south coast. Mr. Johnson said that the south coast was to be preferred in incipient cases of pulmonary disease."

"But, I hope that there is nothing wrong with your lungs, dear mamma?" and Helen Melladew came close to her mother, her voice and manner betokening the serious concern to which the question gave rise.

"Oh, dear, no! at least I trust not; though it may be as well to see Dr. Fleam as we go through London. I rather want him to give me a fresh prescription; and I should be glad if *you* would consult him?"

"Me, mamma! whatever for?"

"I am afraid, my dear Helen, that your chest is not quite as it should be."

"Oh, mamma! why, I am as well as possible!" said Miss Melladew gaily; though, perhaps, if her mother had said heart instead of chest, the young lady would have recognized more of truth in the allegation.

"Ah!" sighed Mrs. Melladew, as she shook

her head, "but a mother's eyes are observant; and I do not like to see you getting thin and spiritless, and losing your colour and appetite."

"It is the hot weather, I daresay," pleaded Helen. "Besides, I don't want to get fat, and be known as the stout Miss Melladew. Don't fret about me, dear mammy! I am quite well; and you shall see what an appetite for dinner I shall bring back from my walk. I must really go now; for I faithfully promised poor old Mudge that I would be there early in the afternoon, to cut out Phœbe Fletcher's work; so good-bye, you dear old fidget!" and Miss Melladew kissed her mother so heartily and rapidly that the worthy lady had scarcely sufficient breath left to bid her daughter not over-heat herself by walking fast, and to be sure not to sit in a draught when she got to the school.

"And, by the way," she added, just in time to arrest Helen's steps as she was quitting the room, "I was thinking that, as we had never been to Brighton, we might as well go there."

"Brighton!" said the young lady, "why, it will be all heat and gaiety. Could we not go to some quieter place, where we can really enjoy the sea?

I suppose that was old Pillbox's recommendation, in order to brighten me up a little?" and the rash young woman smiled at her own bad pun.

"Mr. Johnson," said her mother, with due emphasis on the word, "and not Mr. Pillbox, certainly mentioned that the more sheltered western portion of Brighton was found beneficial in—in——"

"In incipient cases of pulmonary affection!" continued the young lady, with a tolerably clever imitation of their surgeon's voice. "I think I hear the little man laying down the law about me; for I suppose that I am regarded as the interesting incipient case?"

"Your health, my dear child," said Mrs. Melladew, very seriously, "is giving me great cause for anxiety; and it will do much to relieve my apprehensions if you will go with me to the south coast as soon as we can make arrangements to leave."

"I will go willingly, dear mammy, if it will be of the slightest relief to your mind; though I think I should prefer to go anywhere rather than to Brighton. Every one seems to speak so of its crowds and gaiety. And it must be so frightfully hot there; and we shall always be meeting

people that we don't care to see. London at the sea-side may be all very well for those who like it, but, for my part, I would rather have the sea-side without the London. So, anywhere that you please on the south coast, so that it is not Brighton."

"Well, I will think over it, my dear," said Mrs. Melladew, as her daughter left the room; "and don't overdo yourself at the school, but leave that to Mr. Ansley."

"Very well, mamma;" but Helen Melladew could not see why she should allow the burden of her own school work to fall upon Mr. Ansley's shoulder. So she summoned her little dog "Pepper," a real Dandie Dinmont, and the faithful companion of all her rambles; and, telling Joseph, their old groom, that she should not ride that afternoon, set off to the school, the grateful Pepper performing frantic dances in the immediate advance of her steps.

CHAPTER II.

THE MELLADEWS OF MELLADEW.

HELEN MELLADEW and her brother Edgar were the only surviving children of their parents. Their father had died somewhat suddenly, rather more than two years before the date of the commencement of the present story; and Edgar Melladew had very unexpectedly become the head of his family, and the proprietor of the family estates, at the early age of five-and-twenty. At the time of his father's death he had been absent with his regiment; but, as soon as he was able to do so, he disposed of his commission, and took up his residence at Melladew Manor as the Squire of the parish.

There was no family in the rich agricultural county of Hopshire—so famous for its county families—that was more respected, or was more deserving of respect, than the Melladews of Melladew. But the family had dwindled down to three representatives; and Edgar was the sole person left out

of that once widely-spread race to hand down the family name to a future generation. As yet he was unmarried; and, although the gossip of the neighbourhood very freely gave him away not only to Miss Hawley and the two Misses Gattertop, but to every more or less eligible young lady who came within the radius of twenty miles from the manor, it did not appear that he had either bestowed his heart upon, or proffered his hand to, any damsel either far or near. Nor did he seem in any particular hurry to do so. For the present, he had found plenty of work to do upon his estate; and, as the work was altogether new to him, he had so much to learn, that he felt somewhat encumbered by the novel duties of his position—duties which he was resolutely determined to discharge in the best way that befitted the last representative of the honoured name of Melladew.

So, what with developing plans for the improvement of his property, talking them over with Dibbles, his steward and farm-bailiff, altering, amending, and carrying them out—what with not only qualifying himself for the office of a county magistrate, but also qualifying himself to fill that office with knowledge and discretion, and to make himself a

really useful member of the *Custos Rotulorum;* what with getting up a Volunteer Company, and striving to make it efficient by constant personal superintendence; what with the County Hunt in the winter and the County Cricket Club in the summer; what with the bazaars, fêtes, flower-shows, reviews, balls, assizes, turnpike-trusts, road-meetings, gaol-visitings, and various other assemblies and gatherings, whether for business or pleasure, that had a claim upon his support and attendance, Edgar Melladew found himself to be quite a busy man—very much so, indeed, for one whose days for the last few years had chiefly been passed in dull country quarters, and who had never known more active military service than a few months' musketry drill at Hythe. The life of a country squire was a strange novelty to him; on the whole, it was undoubtedly a very agreeable novelty; but it was a life that was burdened with great responsibilities, and which was clogged with duties that at present were somewhat onerous. Edgar Melladew, while he took to them kindly and stuck to them manfully, endeavoured, to the best of his ability, to make the most of his position, not only for his own sake, and to sustain the personal reputation

of the Melladews, but, still more, to benefit and raise the character of those who lived upon his estate, and were consequently brought under his immediate sway or influence.

His father, partly from constitutional apathy and partly from chronic ill health, had not particularly troubled himself about the management of his property, but had allowed matters to take pretty much their own course, and had accepted the state of things that had descended to him from his father as the normal condition of the Melladew estate, and to be as little meddled with as the laws of the Medes and Persians. But the son was of a different temperament, and, as was to be expected, did not wish that the family motto, "*State super antiquas vias*," should be construed in successive generations with precisely the same signification. The thorough conservatism of the family might, he considered, be adequately maintained, although it embraced the progressive novelties of the age. To keep themselves fully abreast of the leading intelligence of the times in which they lived was, in his opinion, a duty incumbent upon the Melladews, even if they were unable to go beyond this and present themselves as pioneers in

the path of progress. Edgar Melladew had even tried the latter plan, although he would have been content with the former; for, during a tediously long winter passed in unusually dull quarters, he had applied himself with great industry to the study of engineering and gunnery, one of the earliest visible fruits of which study resulted in his invention of a bomb, containing ten chambers, which could be exploded *seriatim* or simultaneously. Such, at least, were the pretensions of his bomb, as set forth in his plans and diagrams on paper; but as a non-appreciative Government refused to give the new projectile a trial, its inventor grew tired of sounding its praises in deaf ears, and abandoned his designs of revolutionizing the gunnery of the country. He would also have abandoned his support of the Government, if it had been possible for a Melladew to change his politics; but this, in the nature of things, was not to be thought of, the Melladews having been always true blue to the backbone, and stanch opponents of the buff, whether they themselves stood for their own division of the county, or set up a candidate to support their opinions. Edgar, therefore, contented himself by freely anathematizing

the crass stupidity and expensive short-sightedness of the War Department in throwing cold water upon his novel projectile, and then consigned its descriptive plans and diagrams to the limbo of his writing-desk.

But these engineering studies of his pre-squirearchal period were not without their influence upon him when he found himself the lord and master of Melladew. He could not suffer himself to be content with the existing state of things that had been handed down to him from the time of his grandfather, but he encouraged himself in notions of scientific aids to agriculture, and nearly scattered the wits of his old farm-bailiff by telling him that he had resolved by degrees, and as far as was practicable, to press in the aid of the mechanical arts and steam-power for all farming purposes. Old Dibbles agreed to this, as was his duty; but he did so with many misgivings as to the prudence of the innovations. The old man shuddered at the prospective breaking up of old associations, and the replacing of familiar things by horrific novelties; and to his bosom friend, the parish clerk, he confided his troubles and fears.

"It seems to me," said poor Dibbles, "that

the young master have come home from his soldiering wi' his head stuffed full o' new-fangled notions, and that he means to upset the whole place and turn everything topsy-turvy. For my part, what I says is this: you're the master and I'm the man, and you may do just what you please and give what orders you chuse, and I mun carry them out. But what beats me is, that his trusses should allow it."

"You forget, Mr. Dibbles," said the clerk, "that the young squire's trustees, if he ever had any, would only have power till he came of age, which must be a matter of some six years since; and he don't want trustees now."

"It had been better, leastways in my opinion," said Dibbles, sententiously, "that his trusses had kep' him in hand a few years. If the squire had wrote it in his will that Master Edgar were to have had 'sponsible trusses, the thing would ha' been done, because no one ever went agin the squire's word."

"But he had no need of responsible trustees," observed the clerk, "being of age, and not an infant in the eyes of the law."

"The eyes of the law," said Dibbles, "ain't

eyes as have been used to farming; and in all them sort o' matters the young master's no better than a infant. He be just for all the world like a child with new toys, and always wantin' fresh ones. Now, to my way o' thinkin', if the squire had but appointed 'sponsible trusses—such men, for instance, as Muster Ruff and Muster Reeve—men who knows how farms ought to be worked, he'd have given the young master a chance. Or, if Muster Edgar would but leave it to me, I conceit myself that the land would do equally as well as ever it did in the squire's time. I've worked it now for forty year, and if any one ought to know what it's made of, it's me."

"It be!" said the clerk, with grammar to match that of the farm-bailiff. "And what's your opinion, Mr. Dibbles, of these steam innowations?"

"Innowations, indeed!" growled Dibbles. "I don't flatter them at all, and that's the fact. Why, in the squire's day the farm used to be accounted a moddle, and all the visitors could never ha' done wi' singing its praises; and now, since Muster Edgar has set hisself on this steam, the farm, instead o' being a moddle, is liker to a engine or biler factory. Now, I put it to you, as a sensible

man, that if a farm is a farm, it ought to be worked as sich."

"Of course it ought, Mr. Dibbles," said the parish clerk, approvingly. "But I look upon it that all these engines and steamers and other innowations belongs to the innowating spirit of the times, as is continually a-going about seeking whom it may devour. Them's my opinions, Mr. Dibbles, and you are at liberty to mention 'em."

"Thankee!" said the farm-bailiff; "I'm quite o' that way o' thinking myself, and I'm glad that you are of the same mind. I never did flatter them innowations."

"They be dangerous, Mr. Dibbles," said the parish clerk, sententiously; "they be dangerous. You may take my word for it that they be all of a piece with them 'Essays and Reviews,' and posturings and monkeries, and goin' dead agen the Scriptures. Oh, Mr. Dibbles! what a age it is as we lives in!—a age o' innowations, where they clears away the old things for the new with as little ceremony as though they were Mr. Twill the draper a-clearin' out the old stock from his windows to make room for the new fashions. Ah, Mr. Dibbles! this is indeed a innowating age!"

Dibbles solemnly shook his head. The subject was too serious for further remark without involving his young master in a condemnation which he was unwilling to bring against him. There were some subjects on which he would not reveal his innermost thoughts, even to his bosom friend; and one of these was his full belief in the mental superiority and strict rectitude of the head of the Melladews for the time being. So he closed the conversation and bade adieu to his friend with the remark, "Muster Edgar means well; and though it would ha' been better if he'd been put under 'sponsible trusses, yet his heart's in the right place, and he'll be older in a year or two." Which were propositions that scarcely admitted of an erroneous solution, and invested their speaker with the air of having delivered a favourable and conciliatory judgment.

But the farm-bailiff and his friend had certainly some ground to go upon for the line of opinion they had taken; for Edgar Melladew had introduced into his model farm many new-faugled notions, of which poor Dibbles declared that he "made no account," and concerning which he prophesied all kind of mishaps, very few of which,

however, came to pass. The idea of ploughing land without the help of horses was a new method of tillage, concerning which Dibbles was unable to decide whether it passed a greater slight upon him or upon his well-fed teams; and on that momentous day when he first saw the steam-plough so cleverly clearing its furrows as it glided to and fro across the field, Dibbles was inclined to ascribe the whole invention—wire-rope, anchor-pulleys, clip-drum, and snorting engine—to Satanic rather than Fowlerian agency. Dibbles retaliated for any slights passed upon the old system by little jokes at the new; and at such times few things pleased him more than drawing attention to the coal-stack and saying, "That be the stack o' carn, that be, for the young master's team;" though, whether he said "team" or "steam" was to Dibbles the very point of the joke. It was in vain to reply to him that the steam horses only consumed their black provender when at work, and that they were not eating their heads off in their idle moments; for Dibbles always showed his generalship in evading present defeat by changing his point of attack, and contenting himself with the enunciation of a possible contingency: "She'll be out o' gear in a

week, and she'll always want tinkering and mending," the feminine article referred to being, of course, the despised steam-plough.

But Dibbles had to withstand so many shocks to his old-fashioned notions that before very long he became case-hardened, and looked upon the innovations as part and parcel of those infidel and rationalistic tendencies of the age of which his penny paper from time to time informed him, and which his friend the parish clerk had told him were at the root of everything that was new and strange. Dibbles had considered that he had done his best to put down these alarming novelties by signing his name to a petition, carried round by the clerk, for the annihilation of the "Essays and Reviews" and Bishop Colenso. It seemed, however, as though Colenso and the "Essays" declined to be put down, and that the spread of new inventions, whether in theological literature or agricultural machinery, was fated to be developed rather than crushed.

The addition to the model-farm buildings of a tall chimney, that vomited smoke as though it had belonged to a vulgar factory, put the crowning stroke to the full introduction of a system that

had been inaugurated by steam-ploughs, cultivators, grubbers, clod-crushers, corn-cutters, straw-elevators, reaping machines, haymakers, drop-drills, and other novelties that brought Dibbles to the verge of desperation, and extorted from him the unwelcome admission that "he supposed he must go to school again; for what wi' stemmers and scarifiers, it seemed as if he know'd nout."

And certainly there was a great deal to be learned, not only by poor Dibbles, but by all the labourers on the estate. Old knowledge had to be supplanted by new, and the confirmed habits and customs of many years had to be broken through, and made to give place to what was strange and irksome. The traditions of many generations were summarily exploded, and young Hodge discovered that the modern Arcadia was a very different country to that which had been explored by his father and grandfather. Edgar's sweeping innovations made no small stir, and for a short time caused him no little difficulty; and if it had been possible for a Melladew to have been unpopular in Melladew village, the young squire stood a fair chance of attaining to that unenviable distinction. But the transition period, though an uncomfortable

one, was happily not very long in its duration, and was speedily forgotten in the benefits that flowed from that better order of things to which it was the initiation. No labourer had been discharged from the estate, although the character of his work had in certain cases necessarily undergone a change. While the improvement of the land was being attended to, in new fences, deep drainage, refuse-tanks, guano, fertilizers, and everything that could tend to make two blades of grass to grow where one had grown before, the well-being of the tiller of that land was as earnestly studied. If new sheds were erected for the stock, new cottages were also built for the hinds; the man was not sacrificed for the beast, nor was the fat ox counted of more worth than the spare Christian. In the question of agricultural homesteads, the housing of the human cattle was deemed a matter of sufficient importance to claim the first attention and best care of the landlord; much to the wonderment of poor Dibbles, whose thoughts and plans traversed the old well-worn ruts, and were usually left there, buried in the mud and slime. Dibbles's method with his farm-labourers was to "let 'em ruggle on" in the same condition in which he had found them;

and if any repairs were absolutely required for their cottages, "a bit o' mortar and lime" would make everything straight. Why the cottage of a married man with a mixed family of children should contain at least three bedrooms, was, to Dibbles's comprehension, an enigma propounded by the young squire to which no rational man could be expected to give a sensible answer. It was a matter that removed itself to the category of steam-ploughs, reaping machines, and those other rationalistic tendencies of the age which were attributed by Dibbles and his friend the clerk to the influence of Colenso and the "Essays and Reviews."

Despite, however, the displacement of all poor Dibbles's accustomed and traditionary ways of thought, and notwithstanding the adverse feeling with which the introduction of so much agricultural machinery was regarded by a large proportion of the farm-labourers on the Melladew estate, yet, when it was soon made evident to their sluggish minds that their work was not taken away from them, and that their condition was vastly improved by the changes that were being effected, the popularity of the young squire, which had been sadly

on the wane, began to revive, and from that time continued steadily to increase. The troubles of the transition era had been safely tided over, and at the date when this story introduces him to the reader, in the month of July in the year 1863, Edgar Melladew, then in the twenty-seventh year of his age, found himself not only the owner of Melladew Manor and a person of substance and position, but a man also who was respected and beloved by his neighbours and dependants.

Between Edgar and Helen Melladew there had always been a bond of affection that does not ever, and of necessity, exist between those of the same family. The sister had always been the pet of her brother, and the brother had ever been the glory and the delight of the sister. The five years difference in their ages—which Edgar often laughingly declared to have been the only difference that had ever existed between them—made the brother by that much his sister's senior, and in their early days had given him a superiority over her which she had acknowledged in a hundred pretty ways, and of which in after life she always, though unconsciously, accepted the influence. They grew up not only to the heritage of a good name, but of

good looks also—an inheritance on which as much store should be set as on any other of the Creator's gifts, although not to be degraded or debased to the slavery of vanity and self-esteem. Edgar, with his fair hair, blue eyes, clear ruddy-brown complexion, and cleanly-cut features, fully as much evinced himself to be a Melladew as did his sister Helen, with her far darker hair and eyes. The family portraits at the manor presented many pleasing specimens of either type of face; and the introduction into the family of fresh alliances by marriage, while it brought about the appearance of various minutiæ in the shade of the hair or eyes, and the formation of individual features, had not destroyed the general characteristics of the Melladew face, in which a clearly-cut nose and strongly-marked chin could be traced through the series of portraits for more than four centuries, since the days when the founder of the family, Maurice de Wyvill (afterwards Melladew) had been constituted one of the Commissioners for the county of Hopshire for taxing a subsidy, granted by the king, and had there married Agnes, the heir-general of Gerard Melladew, and had thus acquired the lands, and had subsequently taken the name, of his wife.

The Melladews, it is believed, were not a little proud of their features, and looked to the reproduction of the family nose and chin much in the same way that they regarded the transmission of the heirlooms of the estate, and would no more have willingly changed the fashion of their face than they would have sent their old silver plate to the melting-pot of a Houndsditch Jew. Family pride can even cling to such a small thing as the pattern of a nose; and his grace the Duke of Dash is said to be not a little vain of the ancestral colour of his hair.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE COPPICE.

IF we accompany Miss Melladew on her walk to the village school, we may perhaps be able to guess at one motive for her visits to that humble temple of education, although the young lady herself would at once have spurned the idea of any such motive influencing her in her good deeds to her poorer neighbours. Still, while human nature is so curiously constituted as it is, even the best-intentioned young ladies are susceptible of certain feelings and impressions which materially assist to tinge the colour of their actions, and to form the pattern which is destined to be worked out in their lives. And Helen Melladew, although in every sense of the term a very superior person, could no more rise superior to the feelings incident to poor humanity than she could have turned the stream of her existence into a new channel. Nevertheless, beneath that stream, pure as it undoubtedly was, there were under-currents that

might prove the cause of ruin and misery; and motives, of which the young lady might scorn to recognize the existence, may have been lying deep beneath the surface-reasons that appeared to her to sway her in her visits to the village school.

In order to reach it she had but half a mile to walk after she had left the manor; for the school was built no great way from the park fence, and just on the outskirts of Melladew village. It was a pretty building, small, but quite large enough for its purpose; and had been put up about a year previous, at the expense of the young squire, but chiefly through the instigation of his sister. A house for the mistress formed a conspicuous portion of the small block of building; and a patch of greensward, neatly railed in and lying between the school and the park gates, made a playground for the children and an open frontage to the approach to the manor. Instead of following the carriage drive to the lodge, Helen Melladew took a shorter path across the park, where she could have the shelter of a belt of trees, whose dense shade was so refreshing on such a sultry day.

It was the last week in July, and the weather for some days past had been almost insupportably

hot. The heavy leaden atmosphere was breezeless and oppressive, and painful in its intensity. "I think it must be the weather that makes me feel so languid and out of sorts," thought the young lady as she slowly threaded her way along the narrow path between the tall clumps of fern and the wild undergrowth under the stately trees, the while her little dog Pepper, the accustomed companion of her rambles, trotted by her side: "I think it must be this hot weather that makes me feel so good for nothing. Poor old Mrs. Mudge told me the other day that I was just like her daughter Susan, who died in a decline. According to that worthy dame's version of the story, the doctors told her that she wanted 'rowselling;' but when nothing would rowsel her, she lost all her interest in this world's affairs, and took to her bed and died. I wonder if I am going into a decline, like poor Susan, and that mamma thinks I want rowselling, as Mrs. Mudge says, and so proposes to take me on this Brighton trip. I trust that I may not be like poor Susan Mudge, if it is only for dear mammy's sake, and Edgar's too. They would miss me, I am sure. I wonder if any one else would miss me much. I think you would,

my poor little doggie,"—Pepper evidently signified by his actions that such would be the case, —" and perhaps Mrs. Mudge would, and two or three more of the old folks. I wonder whether *he* would miss me?" And with that she fell into a deeper reverie, but one that was confused as a wild dream. Was it as baseless as are most dreams? and who was the emphatic *he?*

She was a pretty sight to behold, as she glided amid the deep shadows of the densely-foliaged trees, in a soft light-coloured dress and all the pleasing trappings of plumed hat, gauzy mantle, and fluttering laces, that make the costume of the modern English lady so graceful and appropriate. Her open parasol was swung listlessly in her hand, there being but scant need for its services in the shaded path she was traversing; and her frank face made its own sunshine amid the summer's day shadows. She was aroused from her reverie by the flutter of excitement into which Pepper had thrown himself on discovering a hare, who, crouched amid the fern, looked placidly at the dog, as though intent to stare him out of countenance. This was a state of things which Mr. Pepper could scarcely under-

stand. To be regarded by a hare with an assumption of indifference was a new experience to the Dandie Dinmont; and he remained at the entrance of the fern brake, growling at the unmoved hare, and apparently making up his mind that it must be a new species of animal, in a closer acquaintance with whom he might possibly play but second fiddle. The hare continued in her crouching form, even when Helen drew near to see who was Pepper's acquaintance, recognizing, it may be, that subtle and mysterious essence which would seem to pervade some persons, and to convey to dumb creatures the assurance that no harm will befall them even from the closest proximity. And there was this nameless charm about Helen Melladew—a sweetness that manifested itself in every word and look—a confiding trustfulness of manner that seemed to ask for similar sympathy, and could draw it forth—a power of attraction that was as wondrous as any force, whether odic or magnetic. She was one to love and to be loved, one whose affections would be frankly and fearlessly bestowed, and whose nature would not be satisfied without the return of as full and free a love as she had given.

"You beautiful creature!" she said, addressing the crouching hare in language that a male Echo might have been tempted to address to herself; "you beautiful, soft-looking, loveable creature! how I should like to have you in my arms to pet and caress you! A timid little thing, and yet not a bit timid with me, because it knows that I love it and would not hurt it. Come away, my little doggie, or the pretty hare will be frightened." And with no little coaxing she succeeded in withdrawing the reluctant Pepper from a spot so full of mysterious attraction.

"Mamma spoke of Brighton," she thought, as she pursued her way to the school through the fern and under the shadowing trees. "The thought of the sea and of the delicious sea-breeze is certainly not an unpleasant idea in such sultry weather as this. But—Brighton! no! I should not willingly choose Brighton; from all that I have heard of it, it must be too gay and noisy. If Mr. Johnson has persuaded mamma that I ought to go to the sea, and if she really wishes me to do so, I would rather choose some quiet little place in Wales or Devonshire, where one could be free from noise and fashion, and be called upon to

do nothing more than thoroughly to enjoy the calm quiet and the sea-air. But Brighton! no, it sounds too gay, and I feel anything but gay just now. I wonder whether I am really going to be ill, or if it is all fancy?"

By this time she had reached a stile, approached by a little plank bridge over a brook. It lay in the way of her path, which would take her through a small coppice, and then, in another hundred yards or so, would bring her once again into the park, close beside the lodge. She crossed the stile; and, when she had done so, perceived, not far before her, a gentleman who was sitting under an oak-tree, with his felt hat in his hand. He was either asleep or buried in thought; for he did not hear her approach; but his back was towards her, and he was partially concealed from her by the trunk of the tree.

"I wonder that Pepper does not bark a signal," thought Helen; but, on turning to look for her dog, she found that he was many yards behind her. The sagacious animal had probably been troubled in his mind as to the nature of the creature whom he had seen crouched amid the fern, and had trotted back to settle the question by

another inspection. There was nothing, however, that could cause the young lady any alarm, for the figure was evidently not that of a tramp or poacher; and, before she had taken two steps from the stile, she had recognized him to be no less alarming a person than the Rev. Gilbert Ansley, the curate of the parish.

Why should she pause and think, "He does not see me! he has not heard me! I will get over the stile again, and go round by the hedge?" Was he so utterly distasteful to her that she was thus anxious to avoid a chance meeting? But, before she could decide upon taking a step so retrograde, a little dog, shiny and smooth and black and tan, had leaped over the curate's legs, and had advanced to meet the young lady with a series of sharp and defiant barks delivered in rapid succession, and scarcely to be checked by the whistle and call of his master, who had at once jumped up, and came to her hat in hand.

"Down, Fidget, down! I hope that my rude little dog has not frightened you, Miss Melladew, and made you think that poachers were abroad. I was on my way to the manor, and was taking the short cut; but I was so overcome by the in-

tense heat, that I had stopped to rest awhile under the grateful shade of that fine old oak. What a magnificent fellow it is! and though hollow and riven, yet full of vitality,—as that dense foliage from its long arms can abundantly testify. I was talking about it but the other day to the squire's woodman, who is thought to be a good judge of forest timber, and he imagines the tree to be about eight hundred years old. If so, it 'circles in its grain' more than 'five hundred rings of years;' and I have been wondering whether it has been a witness to such stirring scenes as those recorded of the Talking Oak. Do you remember Tennyson's lines about old Summers, and bluff Harry, and the gloomy brewer, and all the rest of them?"

Helen Melladew did remember the lines: she also remembered other lines in the same poem that were highly suggestive of tender emotions, and which, perhaps, were not altogether absent from the curate's thoughts. When a young man quotes Tennyson to a pretty girl in a coppice on a sunshiny summer day, even a Zadkiel might be induced to presage with some degree of confidence the future to which it might lead. Nevertheless, not a word had ever passed between Helen Mel-

ladew and Gilbert Ansley but what might have been heard by all the gossips in the neighbourhood, and from which it would have been very difficult for them to have framed a heavier bill of indictment than that there had been an interchange of the ordinary civilities and amenities of social life. If they drew erroneous deductions from frank and agreeable manners and the tolerably close companionship that necessarily resulted from the friendly intercourse of two persons who were thrown greatly into each other's society by the respective positions that they held in the same small parish, then such particular inferences might be drawn almost anywhere and of everybody, and the deducers might possibly be traducers,—as, indeed, is not unfrequently the case.

"It is so hot," said Miss Melladew, in reply to an ordinary weather remark of the curate's, "that I had taken this path as the coolest that I could find. I was on my way to the school."

"Then, if you will allow me, I will turn with you, as I also want to go there. And, indeed, my call at the manor would chiefly have been to mention the highly interesting piece of information that Mrs. Mudge was in need of a fresh supply of

calico. I thought that the heat would prevent you from coming down to-day; and, as Mrs. Mudge was especially urgent, I promised to prefer her request in person."

"Thanks. Mamma had remembered the want, and had already provided for it. Would you mind whistling Pepper for me? He has strayed away; and whistling is not one of my accomplishments."

Thereupon Mr. Ansley pursed his mouth into the most approved form, and "whistled loud and shrill," like Robin Hood himself, or any other bold outlaw under the greenwood tree; and, after also awaking the echoes with sundry shouts of "Pepper! Pepper!" that little truant made his appearance in the coppice, apparently eased in his mind as to the investigation he had made amid the fern, and quite ready to make common cause with Fidget in the chase of any hare or rabbit that should be bold enough to cross their path.

"Weather like this makes one long for the sea!" said Mr. Ansley.

"Yes," replied the young lady; "the sea-side would certainly be pleasant just now. I fancy that mamma is plotting to take me there."

"I am glad to hear it; change does every one

good; and, as the harvest holidays will so soon be here, there will be no school to be cared for. Even Mrs. Mudge is going to take a holiday!"

"What a wonderful event!"

"Is it not? The poor old soul has never travelled by rail; but has at last been induced to trust herself to its tender mercies, and to visit her married daughter, who lives some thirty miles from here."

"It is to be hoped that there are no long tunnels on that part of the line. The journey will enlarge Mrs. Mudge's ideas, for she has never yet been out of Hopshire."

"It is the time for a holiday," said the curate; "and I am almost thinking of taking a holiday myself, if I am able to get away for a short time, and if I can arrange with Mr. Pordage about my duty." Mr. Pordage was the rector of Melladew.

"I should think you could do that. I am sure that Mr. Pordage is as kind as he is"—(fat, she was about to say, but changed the word into)—"stout." They both laughed.

"Poor man!" said the curate of his rector, "what a burden his 'too, too solid flesh' must be

to him in such dog-day weather as this. If it was not for the constant exercise that he so perseveringly takes, he would scarcely be able to walk."

"Waddle!" laughed Miss Melladew, as a suggestive correction.

"But I fancy he is going to take a holiday himself. He was talking very ominously the other day about Chamouni."

"Chamouni! why, surely Mr. Pordage is not thinking of being a member of the Alpine Club?"

"There is no knowing what desperate designs he has in his head. He has lately been putting himself under stricter discipline than ever as regards pedestrianism and the frequent use of the dumb-bells, and for aught I can tell he may be entertaining wild visions of scaling Mont Blanc itself. But one thing is certain; if Mr. Pordage is about to take his holiday, I must postpone mine. Yet I should be glad to take it shortly, for I heard from my sister this morning, and she is going with an aunt to the sea, and wishes me to join them there."

"That will be very nice," said Miss Melladew; and she thought, "I wonder where it is?"

"Yes! and time not wasted, for the sea-air

braces one, and gives one vigour for fresh work. I am not half satisfied with my duties here, and I hope to do more than I have done. Mr. Pordage gives me free liberty and license for any parochial novelties in the educational shape; and I intend to begin with a night-school at the end of November, and to carry it on through the winter months. There are at least two dozen boys that I can count upon; but my only difficulty is with the young ladies."

"If I could help I should be very glad."

"Oh, it would not do for you to risk your health by coming out on the winter nights into a hot school-room. I think that Mrs. Melladew—to say nothing of Mr. Johnson—would pronounce against such a scheme. But if you would kindly think it over about the girls, and give me some plan by which to work, I shall be very thankful, for I am quite a novice at night-schools. I suppose I must take the girls on a different evening from the boys."

And he continued to discuss this theme with his companion until they had passed through the park-gates, and were in front of the village school, where he bade her "Good morning."

"I wish he had told me where his sister was going," thought Helen Melladew. It may be as well to ask him." So she put the question to him,—

"Where did your sister think of going?"

"She says that they are thinking of Brighton," was the reply.

"Brighton! Oh, indeed! Good morning, Mr. Ansley." And they separated.

CHAPTER IV.

PLOTTING AND PLANNING.

WHEN Helen Melladew had left the room on her way to the school, her mother at once resigned herself to a mental disquisition on the rival claims of St. Leonard's, Torquay, and Lymington, considering Brighton, for the present, to have been set aside by her daughter's evident unwillingness to sojourn at so gay and large a place. They had already been to the two first places on Mrs. Melladew's mental list; and, although they had found Torquay to be pleasantly cool, yet Helen had been discontented with the bathing; and, when they were at the Grand Parade at St. Leonard's, Mrs. Melladew had been so far from well that they had taken a dislike to the spot except for a winter residence. With Lymington they had not yet made acquaintance, although when last they were in the Isle of

Wight they had heard much in its favour. She at length came to the conclusion that they had better decide upon one of these three places—Lymington, the Isle of Wight Undercliff, and Worthing. The last-named spot had occurred to Mrs. Melladew's mind from its nearness to Brighton, whither she was quite bent upon taking her daughter, their medical man, Mr. Johnson, having told her so many instances that had come under his own knowledge of the permanent benefit that had been derived in "incipient cases of pulmonary affection" from a prolonged visit to the queen of British watering-places.

"If we can get to Worthing," thought Mrs. Melladew, "I think I shall be able to overcome Helen's objections; and we can then go on from there to Brighton."

She therefore decided that when her daughter returned from her visit to the school she would suggest to her that Worthing should be the spot for which they should first set out, reserving Brighton as an *arrière pensée*. She had another motive for fixing upon Brighton. In talking over the subject with their medical man, Mr. Johnson had told her that he had the greater confidence in

recommending Brighton, in preference to any other spot on the southern coast, as his brother-in-law, Dr. Tanner Jones, had settled in practice there, and had been instrumental—"under Providence," as Mr. Johnson considerately added, much to the satisfaction of Mrs. Melladew's theological bias—in restoring to perfect health many "interesting cases of bronchial and tracheal affections, and incipient disease of the pulmonary organs." Mr. Johnson therefore very strongly recommended a visit to Brighton as the means of restoring Miss Melladew's failing health, and checking those symptoms that had been noticed by the observant mother, and were causing her serious apprehensions. And, if Mrs. Melladew would wish to put herself and her daughter under the medical superintendence of Dr. Tanner Jones during their stay in Brighton, Mr. Johnson would inform his brother-in-law as to the young lady's antecedents in health and disease, in order that he might know her constitution as well as did Mr. Johnson himself, who had professionally watched over her from her very birth. All of which was very kind of Mr. Johnson, not to say brother-in-law like, and was a further induce-

ment for Mrs. Melladew to take her daughter to Brighton.

For, for some time past, she had noticed a decided change in Helen. She seemed moody and abstracted; her colour came and went in an uncertain way; and, worse than all in Mrs. Melladew's eyes, her appetite seemed to have forsaken her. She was beginning to look thin and pinched, and her mother fancied that she often detected a very suspicious-looking hectic flush in her cheek. Could it be the rosy banner waved by the advance-guard of consumption—an advance-guard that so often proved to be a forlorn hope? If so, let it be seized and dealt with while there was yet time. Whatever could be effected by medical strategy and skill, or by change of scene and climate, should be done at once, for neglect might prove fatal. The mother's love worked upon the mother's fears, and led her to presage the gloomiest prospects, and to picture the most darkly-tinted scenes for their future home-life. Perhaps this was the more natural and excusable, as she had already lost her second son from consumption, and therefore might expect to find the seeds of that terrible disease implanted in her

two other children, although, as yet, they had showed no signs of being numbered among its victims. But every cough from which Helen suffered, however slight and transient, threw the anxious mother into an agony of expectation as to what stage of the dreaded disease it might be the precursor; and Mr. Johnson's assurance, that it was "merely a slight irritation of the bronchial tubes," was not sufficient to reassure her fears, until the cough itself had passed away, and Helen was herself again. Tempted to smile, as she often was, at her mother's over-anxiety, yet Helen was sufficiently sensible, as well as affectionate, to appreciate its cause, and to endeavour to remove all grounds for needless apprehension by acquiescing in those arrangements which were made for the preservation of her health, however little she might believe them to be requisite.

Perhaps this may have led her, on her return that afternoon from her visit to the school, to wander into her mother's room at the dressing hour, and say,—

"I have been thinking over what you said about going to the sea, dear mammy, and I am quite ready to go where you please. So don't

let what I said this morning alter your plans in any way."

"I am sure, my dear Helen, I should not desire you to go to Brighton unless you quite wished it; for, if you did not like the place, the stay there might not be of that benefit to your health that I should wish it to be. I had been thinking of Worthing."

"Oh, mamma! I am afraid that Worthing is rather stupid. And I believe that there are no cliffs at Worthing; and there must be cliffs at Brighton, because one hears people talk of the East and West Cliffs. And it is so nice to stand on a great high cliff, with the waves breaking into foam at its feet, several hundred yards beneath you, and the sea-gulls screaming all about you."

Mrs. Melladew thought that it certainly would be nice; for, as she had never been at Brighton, her daughter's imaginary picture of its lofty cliffs was not to be gainsaid, and she was secretly pleased that Helen was coming round to her plans.

"And there are beautiful downs, I know, at Brighton," continued Miss Helen, who, from some cause or other, seemed to have taken a sudden

fancy for that spot; "downs where one could ramble and have delightful rides, and enjoy the sea-breeze at the same time."

"That would certainly be desirable," said Mrs. Melladew, as she yielded herself up to the hands of Pettifer, the joint-maid of herself and daughter. And, as Helen was very fond of riding, it seemed natural that the prospect of a favourable spot for horse exercise should prove a great inducement to her in her selection of a watering place for a summer visit.

"And, after all," said the young lady, "one doesn't go to the sea to be moped to death, and to be wearied out with seeing the same few sights and shops, and meeting the same few people day after day; so, if you wish it, I do not see why we should not go to Brighton, and see a little variety and gaiety. Have you ever been to Brighton, Pettifer?"

"No, miss, that I have not. But my uncle, who was own man to Earl Bareacres, he were frequent there." But whether this stamped the spot as being fashionable, or whether it were equivalent to a vicarious acquaintance with Brighton on Miss Pettifer's part, did not transpire.

"Then you would really have no objection to go to Brighton, my dear Helen?"

"Not in the least, mamma!"

"Then we will talk it over with Edgar. There is the second bell!" and, as Miss Pettifer had brought her mistress's toilette to its appointed state of perfection, Mrs. Melladew and her daughter proceeded down stairs to dinner.

That same evening, when they were sitting in the drawing-room, waiting for coffee and lights, and watching the brazen glow from the setting sun firing the oak-tops, and making the woods and hills assume the deepest tints of green and purple, they returned to the subject that had been discussed by them when dressing for dinner. Helen professed her readiness to take the advice, if not the nostrums, of Old Pillbox, and announced, as though it had come upon her in the light of a recent discovery, that she thought the sea-side—and Brighton especially—would be extremely agreeable. And her mother, after having administered a befitting reproof for her use of the respectable surgeon's nickname, told her that she was very pleased that she should thus, after due reflection, have come to her way of thinking; and

that she was of opinion it would be well to accept Mr. Johnson's kind offer of writing to his brother-in-law, Dr. Tanner Jones, who would look out proper lodgings for them. Then she communicated her plans to Edgar, when he came in for his coffee; and he seconded them heartily.

"I suppose," said Mrs. Melladew, "that you can tell me nothing about the expense of lodgings; for, I daresay when you have been at Brighton, you always stayed at an hotel?"

"Yes; at the 'Bedford;' with which I was so satisfied that I never changed my quarters."

"Is it a respectable hotel?" asked his mother; "I mean, respectable for ladies. Of course, you gentlemen can stay anywhere."

"Respectable! My dear mother, I smile at your innocence. Eminently respectable, not to say aristocratic. Two live ladies and a countess, with a liberal sprinkling of honourable mistresses and misses, were sheltered beneath its roof the last time that I was within its palatial walls. And what would you say to a landlord who was a highly-cultivated man—a student and a book-worm—a good classic—a poet, with a knowledge of poets—a judge as well as a collector of pictures

—a connoisseur in various branches of the fine arts, and with an original theory as to the author of Junius? What would you say to a hotel with such a superior man for its proprietor? Would it be sufficiently respectable for you?"

Mrs. Melladew was crushed at the thought, and at the slur she had so unwittingly cast upon such an aristocratic establishment. Her idea of a landlord was based upon the proprietor of the "Melladew Arms," in their own village; who was a very large and important personage, but whose normal state was a mixture of shirt-sleeves, knee-breeches, long pipe, and general bemuzziness; and if the accomplished gentleman who had been described by her son was to be accepted as a sample of the Brighton hotel proprietor, Mrs. Melladew shuddered to think to what pitch of superiority the keepers of the Brighton lodging-houses might attain. This, however, was a point on which Edgar could throw no light; and for the present Mrs. Melladew was forced to consign it to a state of obscurity, in which she hoped for the best, but feared the worst.

"I thought of Brighton," she explained to her son, "because Mr. Johnson so highly recom-

mended it for incipient cases of—for, that is to say—for giving tone to the system."

"Old Pillbox imagines that I want tuning up," laughed Helen to her brother.

"Better wait a while, till September," said Edgar, "and be a little more in the fashion, and a little less in the glaring heat. Brick-pavemented Brighton would be too hot to hold us such weather as this. It will be cooler in September; and the season will be beginning."

"And lodgings will be dearer," said his mother, who was a careful housekeeper, and knew not what exorbitant terms might be demanded by some of those grand lodging-house keepers, of whose superiority of manners and charges she had now got very exaggerated notions.

"I daresay," said Edgar. "But you must strike a balance between gold-dust and dog-day dust, and pay a little more of the former to be freed from the latter."

"But I should like you to be with us," replied his mother, "and you will want to shoot in September."

"I don't know that I care for much shooting, this year especially, as the game lies rather thin;

and I fancy that the stubble will scarcely be clear for the first. At any rate, I will manage that part of the business; and, if you decide upon going to Brighton, I will try to be with you there as much as possible. As I don't care particularly about beginning to shoot on the first I could run up from there and get a few days to stock your larder. Besides, I want to go to Hove, to see if Mr. Rigden can let me have a southdown or two; and I also want to pay a visit to Mr. Hallett's manor farm, to look at his wheat; so I can combine business with pleasure."

"There's a dear fellow!" said Helen. "It will be so much pleasanter if you come—it is so stupid to be without a gentleman."

"A candid confession is good for the soul," laughed Edgar.

"Oh! you know what I mean. We want a gentleman to make himself of use; and I don't like to be without one at sea-side lodgings. He can keep the landlady from cheating, if he does nothing else. Besides, how should I get my gallops on the Brighton downs if you are not with me?"

"I certainly should not like to leave you dependent upon a riding-master. But perhaps you

would get a gentleman for yourself. You will have a varied choice at Brighton."

"It is more likely that you will get there some lady for yourself," was his sister's rejoinder. And certainly more unlikely things might come to pass.

CHAPTER V.

THE PASTOR AND HIS PASTIMES.

ON the following morning, Helen Melladew went to call upon Mr. Pordage, the rector of the parish, to consult him on some parochial matters. She had more than one *protégé* on whom she wished special attention to be bestowed during her visit at Brighton; and although she could leave them with implicit confidence to the curate's care, yet she thought it but the rector's due to make her appeal directly to him. Perhaps, also, she was desirous to ascertain whether Mr. Pordage was going from home for any lengthened stay, or was indeed meditating that Alpine tour of which Mr. Ansley had spoken, and which, if taken, would cause the curate to postpone his holiday.

She set out for the rectory the first thing after breakfast, before the meridian sun should render

walking intolerable. Her way led her through the little coppice wherein, on the previous day, she had met Mr. Ansley. If she had entertained any lurking desire to find him there again she was disappointed, for she and her little dog Pepper met with no interruption to their walk; and, although she went very slowly through the coppice, yet that may have been in order to enjoy its refreshing aisles of coolness, and the charms of its winged choristers. After she had once cleared the boundaries of the park, she very soon reached her destination.

Melladew rectory was a large substantial house of the Queen Anne period, built of red brick with stone dressings, and possessing a comfortable kind of stateliness about its exterior, which was relieved from any positive formality by the profusion of creeping shrubs and plants that overhung the greater portion of its trellised front. Conspicuous amid the yellow banksias, Dundee ramblers, and other climbing roses, and the jessamine, clematis and pyrus japonica, that made such a sweet medley of variegated bloom and leaf around the lower and first-floor windows of the three-storey house, was a magnificent magnolia, that carried its large shin-

ing leaves to the very parapet of the roof. Attached to the house were ample lawns, flower-garden and shrubberies, a conservatory, a walled fruit-garden, an orchard, two paddocks and a large stable-yard, and extensive outbuildings; so that Melladew rectory was what the auctioneers would have called "a very desirable and commodious family residence, standing in its own grounds"—though it would have been needless to add this piece of information, as it was not very possible for it to stand in any other grounds than its own.

In addition to its possessing so good a rectory-house, Melladew was also regarded as an excellent living, being worth, according to "The Clergy List," £620 a-year, which was somewhat more than a pound a head for the parishioners, who, according to the same excellent authority, numbered 587. The schools, as has already been stated, were quite new; the church was in excellent repair; and the duties of the parish did not necessitate the rector to keep a curate. Indeed, it was only quite recently that Mr. Pordage had done so. Mr. Gilbert Ansley was his first venture in the curate line, and had not been engaged until the increasing infirmities of the rector had rendered

it advisable, if not absolutely necessary, for Mr. Pordage to obtain assistance in his clerical duties. In addition to the many encumbrances and disadvantages laid upon him through excessive corpulence, Mr. Pordage had latterly been afflicted with attacks of gout; and it had more than once happened that these attacks had visited him early on a Sunday morning, thereby compelling him to close the church, at any rate for the morning service, from sheer inability to provide a substitute at a moment's notice. After his torturing enemy had made him leave his congregation several times in the lurch, Mr. Pordage wisely resolved to keep a curate, and thus render himself independent of the gout, so far as his Sunday services were concerned. His resolution being at once carried out, Gilbert Ansley commenced his clerical life by being ordained to the curacy of Melladew.

It was a family living of the Melladews, and had usually been held by one of that name; but, when it fell to the late squire's lot to present to the living, there was no younger brother, or nephew, or cadet of the family to whom he could give it. He therefore offered it to his old friend Pursey Pordage, who had been his intimate com-

panion at St. Boniface, and with whom he had pulled in the same college boat. That was in the olden time of the tubs, before outriggers and canoes were dreamt of; and although, even at that time, the weight of Mr. Pursey Pordage was placed at 12 st. 13 lb., and gained him a position in the middle of the boat, yet he was regarded as by no means too heavy a man for a crew where a sturdy, vigorous frame was considered to counterbalance what it lost through weight by the vigour that it could lend to the sweep of the oar.

But when the Rev. Pursey Pordage accepted the living of Melladew from his old college friend, his boating days had long been over; and, with the laying aside of his athletic sports, his tendency to increase in bulk had rapidly gained upon him. There was something of a family failing in this; for it was the hereditary tendency of the Pordages to become huge hills of flesh, like Falstaff, good portly people and corpulent, but with a "cheerful look, a pleasing eye, and a most noble carriage." Mr. Pursey Pordage, in referring to his own too solid flesh, would frequently say of himself and his kin,—

"We have been a very stout family; my father

was stout, and my uncle was stout, and my sisters were stout, and I am stout; in fact, we have all been stout, and our family name would more appropriately have been Porter—ha, ha, ha!"

The rector of Melladew, as his curate had said, had lately resorted to various exercises, which, for one of his habits and figure, might almost be called athletic; and among these sanitary measures was daily practice with the dumb-bells. He was thus engaged when Helen Melladew approached the rectory hall-door. It was placed wide open, and thus gave the young lady a full view of her pastor as he stood in the hall, in his shirt-sleeves, swaying his arms violently to and fro, and making vain endeavours to persuade the pair of dumb-bells to meet behind his broad back. It was a remarkable sight. Mr. Pursey Pordage was certainly very stout, indeed: there was not a shadow for doubt on this point, more especially when he was seen as Miss Melladew now saw him. She might have applied the words of Prince Hal to the fat knight, and have thought that the earth did surely never bear "so stout a gentleman." The absence of his loose frock-coat seemed to make him appear fatter than ever in her eyes, as it dis-

closed the ample rotundity of the contour of his figure. His neckerchief and collar were also off, so that his puffed baggy cheeks, his short thick neck, and the series of creased and dimpled chins that interposed between it and his mouth, were seen in all their native fulness. Mr. Pordage was not only in a profuse perspiration, produced by what was to him so violent an exercise, but he was also puffing and blowing like a bulky porpoise or walrus just emerging from the waves. He was too much occupied either to see or hear his early visitor; and he continued to sway himself to and fro with the heavy dumb-bells in his hands, blowing off the steam of his exertion in rapid puffs, while he vainly endeavoured to perform the feat of making the bells to touch behind his back.

The young lady was hesitating whether or not to make her presence known or to draw back for a few minutes, when Mr. Pordage brought his exercises to an end by the muttered remark, "There! I'm sure that's enough for this morning. I think I'll have my soda-water." And as he laid his dumb-bells on the side-table, he turned round and saw Miss Melladew on the door-step.

"I ought to apologize," she said, "for being so early a visitor."

"No apologies, pray," puffed Mr. Pursey Pordage; "for, if you begin, what must I say at being caught in such *déshabille?* This is my morning practice. Come in, pray, out of the sun: but excuse me for a moment, and I will be with you again." And the rector disappeared through a red-baize door to a dressing-room sanctum adjoining his library, leaving the young lady in the large cool hall, with its polished oaken floor and panelled walls.

A great oaken staircase ascended out of this hall,—a staircase of great width, with shallow steps and massive banisters, lighted by a lofty window from the back of the house,—a staircase up which a coach and six might have been driven, if any Musters could have been found sufficiently rash to undertake so impossible a feat. There was a substantial and stately look about this ample staircase and entrance-hall, that was in character with those "teacup times of hood and hoop" to which the house dated its erection; nevertheless it was a very strange-looking hall and staircase, although made so by the peculiar bent of Mr.

Pordage's tastes. He had an absorbing passion, amounting in the opinion of many of his neighbours to a perfect mania, for accumulating the rubbings of monumental brasses; and the panelled walls of his spacious hall and staircase afforded him so favourable a field for the display of the choicest specimens of his beloved art, that he had been unable to resist the opportunity of hanging them there.

There they hung, in all their varied sizes and lengths of shining black surfaces, on which, in white outlines, appeared the figures of grim knights in complete armour, dames and ladies in mantles and wimples, priests all shaven and shorn, bishops in gorgeous vestments, infants swathed in their chrysoms, civilians in tunics and tight hose, interspersed with floriated crosses and canopies, and emblems, and inscriptions, and shields. These shiny sheets of rubbings were hung all around the hall, and were continued up the side of the staircase to the first-floor lobby, whither the white outlines of the knights, ecclesiastics, and civilians appeared to be trooping in a grim procession. All the figures were more or less solemn in appearance and attenuated in figure; this was especially

the case with the mailed knights, whose wasp-like waists must frequently have made Mr. Pordage envious; and even among the figures of ecclesiastics there was not one who could keep the rector of Melladew in countenance by suggesting a portly man like Friar Tuck. Visitors who stayed to sleep at the rectory were not unfrequently alarmed at these attenuated apparitions, outlined in white on their shining black surfaces; and it required some little nerve and use to pass them, on the way to bed, without shrinking from the fixed stare of their wide-open eyes. They carried about them a suggestion of the grave that was a *memento mori;* and they were so many remembrances of the stony pavements of cathedrals and country churches in which the dead were hushed to sleep.

And, indeed, to the unaccustomed stranger who suddenly came upon them in the broad daylight, they bore a grim strangeness that was not a little startling; and the legend ran in Melladew village, that a sturdy tramp who had once ventured to step within the open door of the rectory entrance-hall, had given but one look round at the brass-rubbings, and had forthwith taken to his

heels, proclaiming to his companions that he "had been frit out o' his senses by ghosts," and that the parson's house was haunted. There was nothing in them, however, to appal or startle Helen Melladew, who was not only well acquainted with them from so frequently seeing them, but had also had their respective histories so often recited to her by their possessor that she could almost have compiled a catalogue for his collection. The enthusiasm of Mr. Pordage had infected her with somewhat of a like love for his favourite pursuit, and she had not only gained a little smattering of knowledge concerning monumental brasses, their various styles and periods, and their peculiar relations to archæology, painting, heraldry, ecclesiology, and other arts, but had even rubbed a few specimens herself, and that very creditably, as offerings to the rector's collection.

She was looking at one of these brass-rubbings when Mr. Pordage returned from his sanctum or a dressing-room, duly attired as became the rector of a parish who was receiving a morning visit from his squire's sister. He was somewhat cooler, but was still puffing from his hard work with the

dumb-bells; though there was nothing very unusual in this, for Mr. Pordage was always puffing and gasping. He was very well aware of his infirmity, and would have checked it if it had been in his power to do so; as it was, he endeavoured, when in conversation, as much as possible to conceal his stertorous breathing by terminating his gasp in a low whistle. As a matter of course, it was a futile endeavour on his part, the gasping and puffing being always greatly in the ascendant over the whistling.

"Ah! you are looking at my new acquisition," he said.

"Yes; I thought that this was something new. You have made some alterations, have you not?"

"So you missed my Gaspar de Bohun and his lady?" said Mr. Pordage, with a very pleased expression on his round and rosy face. It was not many of his visitors, especially the young lady portion, who would have taken enough interest in his collection to note any slight change in the hanging of its specimens.

"Yes: I missed it at once. Where have you put it?"

"Half way up the staircase. I was compelled to remove it to make room for this glorious rubbing of the Blankton brass, sent to me three days since by a friend. I had a rubbing of it, but it was so poorly done that I kept it rolled up among my second-rates. But this deserved a place among my best specimens; and, as this panel suited it so well, I was compelled to sacrifice my De Bohun,—though it did not go to my heart to do so, for there was no special peculiarity about it, unless it was the tilting helmet; and those two military brasses on the opposite side of the hall were much better examples of the same period. Wh-ew-ew!" and Mr. Pordage, out of breath from his speech, prolonged his gasp into a low whistle.

"What a beautiful rubbing!" said Helen Melladew. "It seems to be a very fine and well-preserved brass. What a rich canopy!"

"Yes! is it not a gem?" and the rector's eyes gloated over it with all the zest of a true connoisseur. "Quite perfect, you see. It came from a little country church that providentially escaped spoliation and desecration by those abominable iconoclastic miscreants, the Roundheads, who,

wh-ew-ew!" Mr. Pordage's politeness and want of breath compelled him first to gasp and then to whistle; and it was perhaps fortunate for his companion that his momentary pause gave her an opportunity to turn him aside from the mental contemplation of the Roundhead ravages; for she well knew that when he burst forth upon that terrible theme, he could only be brought back with extreme difficulty to rational conversation.

"That was very fortunate," she said. "But are there not some peculiarities in the dress and canopy?"

Her *ruse* was successful, and the rector was at once diverted from the Roundheads. "Yes, these evangelistic emblems in the upper spandrils are very curious and almost unique, and the belt bears the initials of the wearer. See how sharply the letters come out; and note the absence of the helmet and the cropped head of hair. The armour, you will see, is plated, and the shoulders are covered with pauldrons. This would have assigned the brass to within a few years of its proper date, even if the inscription had not told us that its date was 1446. Is it not a gem?"

Mr. Pordage was gasping into a whistle, and Miss Melladew was congratulating him on the acquisition of so fine a specimen of brass-rubbing, when his man-servant, Johnson, entered the hall carrying a small salver, on which were a soda-water bottle and glass.

CHAPTER VI.

PORDAGE'S NECTAR.

ON seeing his master engaged with a visitor, the man was on the point of withdrawing, but was stayed by Mr. Pordage. "It is my usual morning draught of soda-water," he said, "my refreshment after my dumb-bell practice. I drink a good deal of soda-water; it has been recommended to me for keeping down my figure, and it and the dumb-bells and all my walking ought to do something to make me slim and genteel." They certainly at present had not combined effectually to produce the result desired, and poor Mr. Pordage's suit of clothes, instead of beginning to hang more loosely about his ponderous figure, were, if possible, getting a size too small for him.

"Will you have some sherry and soda after your hot walk?" asked the rector.

"No, thanks."

"Or brandy and soda? or, still better, Allsopp and soda? Don't say no; it is delicious. A bottle of soda-water in a small jug of Allsopp's ale; if you have never tried it, you ought to do so, and see how delicious it is on a hot July day. Talk about nectar and ambrosia indeed! What is there in all antiquity that could compare to the liquid amber of Allsopp and Bass, especially when mixed with a bottle of Schweppe? Now, just one glass and a biscuit after your hot walk will do you no harm, I am sure. But you shall see what it is like, and taste and try before you buy." And he went off into a fat whistle, and gave the order to his servant to bring the requisite materials for compounding the morning draught.

Although Helen Melladew declared that she was not thirsty, yet she was compelled to allow Mr. Pordage to have his own way in his own house; and the rector appeared as greatly to need a cooling draught as did her little Dandie Dinmont, Pepper, who, with panting tongue and throbbing sides, had stretched himself at full length on the cool, bees-waxed, oaken floor of the hall, and was winking and glaring at the various figures of dogs,

greyhounds, and lions that grinned at him in black and white from under the feet of their brass-rubbed knights and ladies suspended on the panelled walls. More than one of these little dogs had open mouths and protruding tongues, as though they also were participating with Pepper in the heat of the weather; and one of them was even represented with its neck encircled by a collar, on which was its name, "Bo."

Mr. Pordage directed his visitor's attention to this brass-rubbing, and said, "I think your little dog is admiring my Clifton Reynes rubbing, and is jealous that he has not got a similar collar engraved with his name in church text. But here is Johnson with the materials for a summer brew. I am all anxiety to know your opinion of its merits."

Pepper, frightened by the sharp report of the soda-water cork, beat a retreat under a distant side-table, and Mr. Pordage skilfully prepared the mixture of Allsopp and Schweppe, and presented to Miss Melladew a glassful of the creamy, sparkling fluid.

"Call it champagne, if you like," said the rector. "Not but what it surpasses all the wines

that ever, or never, saw the vineyards of Epernay. I would recommend you to bear it in mind, and when you go to next season's county ball, prevail upon the stewards—of whom your brother is sure to be one—to allow a judicious mixture of Allsopp and Schweppe to be admitted among the refreshments of the evening. It would prove to a ball-room what 'jumping-powder,' as it is called, is to hunting men, and would be a famous preservative from fatigue. I will present you with the recipe, and we will call it Pordage's Nectar."

The young lady laughed and recommended him to take out the patent for himself, and attend at the county ball to advertise its peculiar properties and witness its stimulating and invigorating effects on the dancing portion of the assembly; but as she took a good draught from the tumbler she confessed that it was a deliciously cooling and refreshing mixture for a summer beverage, and that Pordage's Nectar was deserving of the public confidence. She was in the act of taking another draught and finishing what was left in her tumbler, when the Rev. Gilbert Ansley appeared at the open hall-door. Miss Melladew was caught in the act, with uplifted tumbler tossing off a glass of beer at

eleven o'clock in the morning; and although there was nothing to be ashamed of in the act, yet her cheeks and brow were flushed with a rosy hue that was not altogether to be attributed to the sultry weather. Just behind her was a rubbing from the Sawbridgeworth brass of Mary Leventhorp in her starched ruff and stiffened farthingale, who seemed to be looking with pleased surprise that the Elizabethan fashion of morning beer-drinking by young ladies had descended intact to the Victorian era.

"Come in, Ansley!" said his rector. "I am teaching Miss Melladew to prepare a beverage that will be a valuable acquisition to her stock of housekeeping knowledge."

"It looks tempting," said the curate, as he came in and shook hands, while his little dog Fidget bustled over the slippery floor to hold a canine conversation with Pepper.

"It not only looks tempting, but it does not belie its looks," said the rector. "Taste and see for yourself. What says Horace?

> "Illum ego lucidas
> Inire sedes, ducere nectaris
> Succos——"

with an apology for quoting Latin in the presence

of a lady. "But it means, Miss Melladew, when freely translated, that Mr. Ansley can be allowed to enter this brightly-polished hall and join us in quaffing a draught of Pordage's Nectar. If you will give this mixture a due share of your patronage, Ansley, it may save you from getting fat like me. The Schweppe corrects the Allsopp." And the rector puffed and whistled all in one, and summoned Johnson to bring another tumbler and more materials for a fresh brew of his beverage. When it had been made and tasted, Mr. Ansley's opinion of its merits was equally as favourable as that pronounced by Miss Melladew, and Pordage's Nectar was ranked as a decided success.

"But come into the drawing-room," said the rector; "there is no need that we should remain in the hall, though to me it is the most attractive part of the house. I should never desire a picture gallery so long as I have all these beautiful brass-rubbings to look at. I have almost made up my mind to hang the dining-room in the same style, and perhaps the drawing-room will come next. At present I have only about eight hundred specimens, and what am I to do when I have the four thousand that are known to exist? I thought of papering

the bedrooms with them; but my friend Parker of Baliol declares that if I do he'll never sleep here, but take his bed at the Melladew Arms. But some people get such queer fancies into their heads, and Parker was always whimsical. The idea of making any objection to such interesting works of art as these rubbings! it is preposterous. But come in, pray, and rest awhile." And Mr. Pordage, wheezing, puffing, and whistling, and indignant with his old college friend for such a breach of good taste in objecting to pass the night in a room that was papered with gaunt skeleton outlines of mailed warriors and ancient dames, was leading the way into his drawing-room, when Miss Melladew stayed his progress by excusing herself from a longer visit.

"I must really get home. I have rested quite enough, and I promised mamma to be back before the heat of the day."

"But won't you have another draught of Pordage's Nectar?" asked the rector.

"Oh no, thanks; but I enjoyed it very much, and I shall recommend it to Edgar. I daresay he will appreciate it."

"Don't forget to give it its due meed of hon-

our," laughed the rector, as he escorted her to the door. "Pordage's Nectar, remember!"

"Oh, I won't forget!" and she laughingly bade them good morning, and set off towards the school on her way home, with Pepper frisking by her side.

It was not until she had been at the school, and had her interview with its mistress, Mrs Mudge, that it occurred to her that she had left the rectory without having confided to Mr. Pordage those parochial matters that had been the ostensible cause of her early morning visit; and that she had done nothing to ascertain whether Mr. Pordage was about to take a holiday, or set out on his threatened Alpine tour. "How very stupid of me!" she thought, "something must have put it out of my head. Perhaps it was that new brass-rubbing, or perhaps it was Pordage's Nectar. I wish Mr. Ansley had not come in just at that moment. As to the parish matters, they can keep very well for a few days longer; and I shall see Mr. Pordage again before we leave for Brighton. How *mal apropos* of Mr. Ansley to walk in just at that moment! I would never have gone to the rectory if I could have foreseen this."

But, though she chafed at the thought, yet, as she lingered in the grateful shade of the little coppice on her way back to the manor, she seemed to take pleasure in dwelling in memory on the occurrence of the morning. It so happened—and it may have been from that circumstance that she thought more of the matter—that it was the first occasion on which she and Mr. Ansley had met within the walls of Melladew rectory. For although Mr. Pordage was friendly and sociable, and liked a well-spread table and intercourse with his neighbours, yet he was an old bachelor, and very rarely gave dinner parties that were graced by the presence of ladies. Cumbered as he was by an overamount of flesh that indisposed him for any extra exertion either of mind or body, Mr. Pordage shrank from giving entertainments which his chivalrous respect for the fair sex would not permit him to offer them without first securing their success by extraordinary preparations and unwonted care. It thus fell out that Helen Melladew and Gilbert Ansley had not met under Mr. Pordage's roof until that very morning, when she had found the rector in his shirt-sleeves, busily engaged in his dumb-bell practice, and when she, in her

turn, had been caught by the curate in the act of tossing off a tumbler of beer.

In after years, when the richest nectar of life had been quaffed, they often recalled the strangeness of their first meeting in Melladew rectory, and their mutual admiration for other things there besides Pordage's Nectar.

CHAPTER VII.

CROQUET AND ITS VICTIMS.

A FEW days after he had met Miss Melladew at the rectory, Mr. Ansley went to make his call at the manor, and as he did not, on this occasion, meet with any fair figure in the little coppice to turn him from his intention, he had duly reached the house and the presence of the ladies.

"We are going to the sea," Mrs. Melladew said; "for Helen is not so well as I could wish, and needs a change."

"I hope that the change will be beneficial," said Mr. Ansley. "I am sorry that Miss Melladew is out of health."

"Oh, I am not!" said that young lady, who it seemed was not so deeply in conversation with two other callers but what she could lend an ear to her mother's conversation. "It is a fancy of

mamma's. I do not like this very hot weather any more than any one else does, I suppose."

"She works too much at the school, I tell her," said her mother.

"She is certainly very indefatigable," testified the curate; "and I don't know what the parish would do without her, Mrs. Mudge's attainments not being of a very high order. Mrs. Mudge certainly belongs to the old school."

Mrs. Melladew set up her back at any slur being cast upon a representative of the old school, considering herself to be a member of that *régime;* and she would quickly have engaged the curate in a wordy war on that subject, had he not effected a diversion in his own favour by inquiring to what portion of the coast Mrs. Melladew was bound.

"I think you said your sister was also going to Brighton," said Helen Melladew, when he had received the information he sought; "I should be glad to know her."

Mrs. Melladew secretly wondered how her daughter had come by this intelligence of the movements of the curate's sister.

"I, too, thought that she was going to Brighton," said Mr. Ansley; "but I had a few lines from her

this morning to say that my aunt had changed her mind, and that they were going to Scarborough."

Helen could scarcely repress a word of vexation; but, although she succeeded in doing so, she could not so successfully control her features, and her tell-tale looks spoke their own story to Miss Honora Gattertop, who had been to luncheon at the manor in company with her sister, and who was excellently placed to observe the varying shades of feeling on the expressive countenance of her friend. The Gattertops of Gattertop endeavoured to make themselves out to be equally as good, if not so wealthy, a county family as the Melladews of Melladew; but their pretensions were not altogether successful. Some of the county gossips said that the mother of these two girls was doing her best to fix one of them—it did not much matter which—upon Edgar Melladew; and there may have been some truth in it, for there was a great interchange of civilities between Gattertop and Melladew.

"When do you go to Brighton?" asked Mr. Ansley, but so composedly that Miss Honora Gattertop could not have made any more out of

the query than if it had been addressed to an old cottage dame with reference to the rheumatics.

"In about a fortnight, I believe," answered Miss Melladew.

"Then," he said, "my holidays will be about the same time; for I cannot arrange for my duty before then. I shall have to join my sister and aunt at Scarborough; so we shall each be enjoying the sea, though at different places. My sister will be sorry, I am sure, that she will be prevented from making your acquaintance at Brighton."

Miss Melladew was spared the necessity for any protestations of disappointment at the further postponement of her acquaintance with Miss Ansley, by Miss Gattertop taking possession of the ball of conversation and giving it a vigorous toss.

"Oh!" said that young lady, in a very gushing tone, "how I do envy your going to that charming Brighton! it is so gay and fashionable. I am so sorry we are not going there this year. We tried all that we could to persuade papa to take us, but he was inexorable—perfectly inexorable! was he not, Honora?"

"Perfectly," said Miss Honora; "Papa declares that Brighton is too expensive for two sea-

sons running; and he positively threatens to take us to Rhyl. Fancy going to Rhyl and meeting all the Vulgarhamptonites and Brummagem people!" She was so shocked at the bare idea of so deplorable a catastrophe that Helen Melladew thought of offering her a smelling-bottle.

"For my part," said Miss Gattertop, "I tell papa that he had better take us a tour through the manufacturing districts, and make our head-quarters at Bilston, or some other delightfully rural spot. Really, now! I quite envy your going to Brighton! it is the very place of all others to suit you, especially as you have never been there."

That Brighton should suit Helen Melladew was a perfectly gratuitous assumption on Miss Gattertop's part; and under the present circumstances Miss Melladew thought that Scarborough would have suited her far better.

"I have fixed the hoops," said Edgar Melladew, as he entered the drawing-room from one of the windows that opened to the lawn; "and if ladies who wish for a little croquet will walk this way they will find all ready. You will play, of course, Ansley?"

"Oh yes! we are to have sides, I suppose?"

"But how are we to be disposed of?" said Miss Honora Gattertop. "We are an odd number—three ladies and two gentlemen: unless some one takes two balls. But, if so, that some one must not be you, Mr. Melladew; you play so splendidly." Miss Honora Gattertop, it is but due to say of her, never lost sight of a chance in her own peculiar play—that of endeavouring to make a favourable impression on the young squire of Melladew.

"Mamma! will you take a mallet?" asked Helen. "It will make our sides equal."

"Oh, my dear! you must do without me. You can get——"

"Mr. Pordage!" said the servant, announcing the rector.

"Mr. Pordage! the very man!" said Edgar to Miss Honora Gattertop.

"The very man!" echoed that young lady in a confidential *sotto voce* tone. "Isn't he a dear old fatty? It will be great fun to get him to croquet."

"Mr. Pordage," said Helen Melladew, "you are quite a friend in need: that is, you will be, if

you will join us in a game of croquet, and make our sides even."

"If it will make sides even," laughed Mr. Pordage, as he patted his own stout figure, "it must be a beneficial game for me. Perhaps you prescribe it in gratitude for the recipe of Pordage's Nectar?"

Helen laughed, and felt that Mr. Ansley's eyes were upon her. "No! but I am not quite disinterested; for we want your assistance in making up a game of six."

"But I have not the smallest idea of the game," pleaded the rector; "and have never seen it played."

"Oh! we will teach you, Mr. Pordage," said Miss Honora Gattertop. "It is so easy. And it will be such fun to see the dear old fatty play;" she added, in her confidential tone, to her companion.

So Mr. Pordage was persuaded to join, and went out with them on to the lawn, where every one did their best to initiate him into the mysteries of the game. He and his curate and Miss Melladew had to play against the Misses Gattertop and Edgar Melladew; and Helen bestowed much

needful assistance in helping Mr. Pordage along, carrying him, indeed, through all the hoops under which his red ball had the luck to pass. And the mutual help that was given and received, and the consultations that were held by Miss Melladew and Mr. Ansley, were no doubt exceedingly agreeable if not very exciting, and helped to prove that croquet is the very best game of modern times for "bringing young people together," as the phrase is, and, when they are together, giving them an employment which can be made amusing and interesting without degenerating into boredom, and which can be taken up at any moment by any number for any time. Miss Gattertop and her sister made the most of any little opportunities that the game afforded them for ingratiating themselves in the good opinion of the young squire; and the *pose*, of Miss Honora, as she stood with her dainty foot upon her ball and prepared to roquer Mr. Pordage into the distant shrubs, was so artistically composed that it was within the bounds of possibility to imagine it to be the result of study quite as much as the spontaneous attitude of natural grace. A tall wide-spreading cedar threw its grateful shade across the greater portion

of the lawn whereon the croquet-ground had been made; and as the ladies in their light dresses and gay-plumed hats passed to and fro in pursuit of the various-coloured balls, the whole scene made a very agreeable picture of life, light and motion.

Although Mr. Pordage took great interest in the game, and showed, as Miss Gattertop remarked, "intelligence combined with activity" in its progress, yet his barrel-like figure was more often seen in the background of the picture, whither he retired, between his fitful strokes of play, to converse with Mrs. Melladew, and also to share that comfortable seat where she sat in the shade, *en chaperon* to the young people. Mr. Pordage was in ecstasies, for he had got through a hoop without any assistance—although Edgar had pronounced it to be a dreadful fluke—and he had fixed the clip in a very joyful frame of mind. Instead of retiring to his post beside Mrs. Melladew, he stayed to watch an exciting burst by Miss Honora Gattertop, who was a rover, and who was doing her best, as, indeed, it was her duty to do, to help on her partner Edgar.

"Now, Mr. Pordage," said Honora, "why did you send red in my way? I shall be compelled

to make it take a trip once more to those shrubs." And she assumed that graceful *pose* which she hoped might be more effective on the young squire's heart then on Mr. Pordage's red ball.

A vicious drive sent the red ball gleaming over the smooth turf and beneath the wide-spreading branches of a rhododendron, from which Mr. Pordage had barely succeeded in recapturing it when there was a cry raised, "Red to play on the peg." In his haste to answer the summons, he trotted back across the chequered shade of the lawn, and before he could take heed of Helen Melladew's warning cry, "Mind the hoop, Mr. Pordage!" he had caught his foot in the iron and was flung heavily on to the turf, where he lay like Falstaff on the battle-field of Shrewsbury.

It was a heavy fall, and one that might have been followed by serious effects; but, happily for all, when the other two gentlemen of the party ran to raise the rector from the ground, with anxious inquiries whether he was hurt, he quieted their fear and dispelled the ladies' alarm by laughing heartily, and saying, "I always fancied, with my figure to help the idea, that I must belong

to the Broad Church party; but, undoubtedly, now I must be Low Church."

"The dear old thing!" said Miss Honora Gattertop to Miss Melladew; "what a quiet fund of humour he has! But I am so rejoiced that he is not hurt—he is such a dear! and as it was I who roquetted him to the rhododendrons, I should never have forgiven myself if he had broken his leg or dislocated his poor ankle."

He had given his ankle a twist, however: "Only a twist, not a sprain," he said: "though I must give up finishing my game for to-day. I had thought, when I lay sprawling, that I must be rubbing a brass, instead of which I was only rubbing the grass. Whew-ew-ew!"

"Such a fund of quiet humour!" murmured Miss Honora. "The droll old dear!"

"I fear you will taboo croquet for the future," said Helen Melladew, as Mr. Pordage limped back to the drawing-room with the aid of his mallet for a stick.

"Oh no, I won't," he said. "It's a famous game; just the thing for me, although it has given me a shaking: but it will make me more careful for the future. If you young ladies will

promise sometimes to come and have a game at the rectory, I will get a croquet-ground laid out at once."

The Misses Gattertop would be only too delighted to do so; for it would certainly lead them to meeting the young squire of Melladew more frequently and in new quarters; and who could tell what might come of such meetings? And if croquet was to find its other victims amongst those of the present party, perhaps those victims might have allowed themselves to be conducted to the altar with a readiness that may have rivalled, though it could scarcely have surpassed, that of the Misses Gattertop.

"Croquet," said Mr. Pordage, as he lay at his ease on a couch in the drawing-room, while he waited until the carriage came round, in which, in spite of his remonstrances that he could walk, he was to be driven back to the rectory, but he was unable to resist Mrs. Melladew's commands; "Croquet would be far better for me than billiards; which my doctors have so often recommended to me. And I really believe that if I could manage croquet for an hour in each day, with my dumb-bells in the morning, and a good walk in the after-

noon, and my soda-water and claret, and so on—not forgetting the nectar, Miss Melladew—I believe I need not adopt this new-fangled Banting system, that every one seems to be going wild about—every one, that is, who has attained to my dimensions, or fears that he may do so. My friend Parker, of Baliol, had a friend who tried the system, and it did not at all agree with him; in fact, he died; and it was considered by his doctors—who certainly may have been prejudiced—that his death was caused by too suddenly cutting off the supplies to which he had been accustomed, whew-ew-ew!"

"Oh, Mr. Pordage!" said Miss Honora Gattertop, with great pathos, as she took advantage of the rector's gasping whistle; "pray don't try the Banting system: try croquet instead."

"I will, if you and your sister will promise to come and play on the rectory ground," said the rector, gallantly.

"Indeed we will!" said both the sisters, as though in a duet, expressive of gratitude and joy.

"And I know that I have your promise, Miss Melladew," said Mr. Pordage; "so the ground shall be made." It certainly was made; but not by Mr. Pordage.

The servant announced the carriage, into which the rector was so carefully conducted that he declared he felt himself to be an arrant impostor, who was feigning illness in order to create a sympathy to which he was not justly entitled. As the game of croquet was broken up, and Mr. Ansley was going home, he availed himself of the carriage in order that he might see his rector safely landed and placed under his housekeeper's care.

"And when do you go to Brighton?" asked Mr. Pordage of Miss Melladew, as they were on the point of driving off. She told him. "Be sure you think of me if you should meet with any brasses," he said.

"Oh, yes!" she said, "but I shall see you again before we leave home." She never, however, saw Mr. Pordage again; though she little thought that the adieu that he now waved her was his last farewell; and his final words were afterwards recalled to her mind, invested with that peculiar importance which is ever attached to even the most insignificant syllables, if they have fallen from the lips of an old friend.

CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. MELLADEW'S PREPARATIONS.

IT was settled that the Melladew party should leave for Brighton in the last week in August. The lady-mother had so arranged it, in order to permit her son, after he had settled them in their Brighton lodgings, to run back to Melladew and get a little shooting in the first week of September. The intervening three weeks would be none too long a time to enable Mrs. Melladew to make her preparations. The housekeeper had but half done the preserves; and, although the said housekeeper was very jealous of any interference on her mistress's part, yet Mrs. Melladew never, if she could avoid it, left home at preserving time. Then, she must leave full directions for a thorough house-cleaning while they were away; the drawing-room needed it sadly; and she felt quite sure that there must be dust enough under

the carpet to smother any tidy housemaid; only now-a-days there was no getting a servant that was half particular in her work: what with emigration, and over-education, and crinoline, domestic servants were not what they used to be in her younger days. And then Mrs. Melladew would ramble into a long homily (from which there was no outlet of escape for the listener) on servants and their failings, mistresses and their trials. This was a very fertile theme for the worthy lady of the manor; and when once she was mounted on her hobby it was rather difficult to get her down again.

Thus the intervening days were consumed by Mrs. Melladew in the most elaborate preparations —not only for her stay from home, but for the proper conduct of the manor during her absence. The carpets were to be taken up, the beds were to be taken to pieces, the mirrors were to be carefully cleaned, the chimneys were to be swept, the paint and floors to be well scoured, and a general turn-out was to be effected. Then, a portion of the fruit was not sufficiently ripe for the purposes of preserving; and it seemed doubtful whether the wasps and birds would leave any that would

be worth having. Grapes and wall-fruit were to be forwarded to them at Brighton, together with game and other eatables, and fresh vegetables. A box of these perishable goods would be packed for them to take with them; and, altogether, there was a great deal for Mrs. Melladew to see to.

There was also the important point of servants and carriage. Should they take their carriage and hire horses; or should they also take their horses and put them at livery? But, if the latter, then they must also take coachman and footman; and, as they must also take a maid, they would require in that case the whole of a house, or its greater portion. Was it needful to go to so much expense? Edgar left the matter entirely to his mother, only begging her to do what was best for her own and Helen's comfort: and poor Mrs. Melladew worked the most elaborate sums, and drew up the most perplexed tables, in which she balanced board-wages and hired horses against increased Brighton expenses. It was a long way from their midland county of Hopshire to Brighton, London lying between; and the journey itself, with carriage and horses and two men-servants, would be of itself sufficiently costly, without their

further keep in Brighton; and Mrs. Melladew became quite puzzle-headed in her endeavours to contrive for the best and to decide between conflicting claims. She wished to do everything in a style becoming their position in society; and at the same time—on Edgar's account, and in order to "nurse" his property, as she phrased it—not to spend a penny more than was absolutely necessary. Far from wishing the carriage and horses and servants for the purpose of cutting a dash, she only looked to comfort, controlled by reasonable expenditure, and could ride quite as well in a hired vehicle as in her own, provided that the cushions of the former were equally as soft as those of the latter, and that the cost was not greater in the one case than the other. Still, this carriage question, involving as it did the calculations attendant upon the housing, feeding, and conveying by rail from Hopshire to Brighton of two horses and two men, presented itself to Mrs. Melladew's mind in a variety of difficult and intricate points, and could not be satisfactorily settled until she had fully gone into the minutest pros and cons of the matter. Even then, after daily debating the subject for a week, she did not

feel sure that she had acted for the best, when she came to a final decision to leave at home the carriage and its quadruped and biped belongings, and to go to Brighton attended merely by their maid Pettifer. That domestic was excessively rejoiced at the prospect of the approaching visit to the sea-side; and, as opportunity offered, favoured her fellow-servants with more or less apocryphal traditions of Brighton, as delivered to her by her uncle, who was "own man to Earl Bareacres." Pettifer's communications affected the household; and, permeating through them, were imbibed by the villagers; so that all Melladew was very soon aware that the family from the manor were going to Brighton for the autumn.

Mr. Ansley, at his curate's lodgings, had been soon told of it by his landlady; and not only so, but had been further informed by that worthy woman that the chief reason that took "my lady" (to which brevet-rank Mrs. Melladew was respectfully promoted by the villagers) to the sea-side, was on Miss Helen's account, for that the poor young lady was in "a 'sumption." It had been so told to Miss Pettifer, my lady's maid, by my lady herself, and therefore must be as true as

Gospel. Her poor young brother had died of the same.

Mr. Ansley, as we have seen, was already aware of the Melladews' projected visit to Brighton, and had been told something of Miss Melladew's supposed state of health; but his landlady's communication contained some elements of news for him, in which he concluded there must be a good deal of truth. And all the rest of the day he seemed to be more than usually dejected and thoughtful; but this may have resulted not only from the composition of his next Sunday's sermon, on the preparation of which he was busily engaged, but also from anxiety for his rector. Mr. Pordage was suffering severely from his fall over the croquet hoop, and had been obliged to call in Mr. Johnson to attend him. His foot was more strained than was at first supposed, and had become swollen and painful; and his doctor also found his whole frame violently shaken and jarred. Threatening symptoms of gout had also appeared, and Mr. Pordage was confined to his bed; and, although going on favourably, was so far from well that his curate would probably have to postpone his promised holiday and trip to Scarborough, or whatever

other spot his aunt and sister should visit. It was with some difficulty that he had made arrangements for his own duty during his trip, but he felt that he must abandon it if his rector was not in better health.

"Old Pillbox," as Helen Melladew had improperly named their medical adviser, had not only been in attendance upon Mr. Pordage, but had also, at Mrs. Melladew's request, written to his brother-in-law, Dr. Tanner Jones, to commission him to look out suitable lodgings for the Melladew party, and several letters had passed to and fro on this important subject. Certain difficulties were thrown in the way, as Mrs. Melladew did not wish to take the whole of a house, but at the same time would not engage lodgings where other rooms under the same roof were let to people with children, or to a family any of whose members beguiled their sea-side visit by practising upon the pianoforte or other musical instrument. Mrs. Melladew had already suffered so much from both these evils, and was further desirous, on Helen's account, to get quiet lodgings, that her instructions to Dr. Tanner Jones were clogged with conditions which rendered that gentleman's task by

no means an easy one, and for a time seemed to obscure his professional attainments beneath the duties demanded of an amateur lodging-house agent. But he was kindly disposed, and did all that his brother-in-law and Mrs. Melladew asked him to do.

If her mother had a world of things to see to before they left home, Helen herself was not without her full share of prospective arrangements. The harvest holidays would be ended before her return, and work had to be cut out and put ready for the school children. She had to busy herself about old women, sick persons, pensioners, and *protégés* who would be desolated without her. She had to take her favourite walks and rides for the last time, for she ever had a feeling when she left home, though it was but for a few weeks, that it was like saying good-bye to the dear old place; and, to her gentle and warm heart, a parting was a farewell that induced a certain sadness, and threw a shade of sorrow over the pleasant prospect to which it formed the approach.

During this time she saw but little of Mr. Ansley, and when they met their talk was so ex-

clusively parochial in its tone that it would more appropriately have filled the columns of a district visitor's report than the pages of a story; therefore, if it is not reported here, it is that it had far more interest for the old women and children of Melladew than for the readers of these lines. That it had also an interest for the two speakers was undeniable. It related to subjects in which they had sincere interest, and of which they possessed a competent knowledge, and it led them into little confidences and consultations that were very agreeable. Therefore, these conversations about such uninteresting people as rheumatic old women and uncouth cloddish children had as much charm for Helen Melladew and Gilbert Ansley as though they had been *dilettanti* disputing over gems of art, or two old maids tearing a younger one's reputation to shreds, or two country parsons pulling to pieces their archdeacon's last charge. The illness of Mr. Pordage, and his consequent inaccessibility to the squire's sister, necessarily compelled Helen Melladew to entrust to Mr. Ansley several parish matters on which she had intended to consult the rector, and which she now regretted not having done on the morning when

she had gone to him for that very purpose, and had surprised him at his dumb-bells and been taught the secrets of Pordage's Nectar. But, as it happened, the unfortunate accident at croquet obliged her to confide her parochial wants and wishes to the curate instead of to his rector.

The most important and pleasing point, however, was non-parochial, and did not relate to rheumatic old women and clownish children. For it happened that on the day previous to their leaving for Brighton, Helen Melladew was taking a farewell canter through the village, followed by old Joseph, the groom, when she encountered Mr. Ansley, who said, "By the way, I heard from my sister this morning, and she tells me that as I am unable to get a holiday just yet, until Mr. Pordage is well again, my aunt, who is as fickle as the wind, has given up her idea of Scarborough as being too bleak, and is now divided in opinion between Torquay and Brighton. Perhaps a word from me may make her decide in favour of one or the other."

"Oh, do decide for Brighton, then!" said Helen Melladew, on the impulse of the moment.

But she checked herself, and added, with a heightened colour, "I am so anxious to know your sister."

As Mr. Ansley promised that he would do so, he could not but feel that a sister was a highly valuable institution. But, had he any particular motive for saying, "Perhaps it will end in my aunt deciding to stay at home; and, if so, I suppose that as soon as Mr. Pordage is able to release me I must take a solitary fishing tour in Wales, or somewhere else, to employ my holiday?" Perhaps he wished to study her features merely as a psychological study. If so, he would have perceived there a trace of mingled disappointment and vexation, that said, as plainly as words could speak, "Plague take that stupid old aunt! Why can't she decide for Brighton at once, without making so much fuss about it?"

But, whatever may have been her thoughts, or the reflex of them on her bright sunny face, her words were, "Well, good-bye! I hope you will persuade her to come to Brighton. It will be so very nice to meet your sister there. And I hope that poor Mr. Pordage will soon be quite well again. I am so sorry to go away without seeing him.

Please to give him my very best regards. Good-bye!"

She bent down from her saddle and gave him her hand, and then cantered away with old Joseph trotting after her.

CHAPTER IX.

MISS MELLADEW CAN SAY NINE.

MRS. MELLADEW had left to Edgar all the arrangements for their journey from Melladew to Brighton, merely stipulating that the exigencies of Bradshaw should be so met and mastered as to allow her three hours in town for an opportunity of consulting her London physician, Dr. Fleam, Pulsover Street, Cuppington Square. Ostensibly the consultation with that eminent physician was for the especial benefit of Mrs. Melladew herself; but in reality it was merely a maternal *ruse* to obtain a further opinion than Mr. Johnson's on Helen's state of health. She very correctly thought that if she said much to her daughter on the subject, Helen might absolutely decline to see the doctor and pay a needless fee. Instead, therefore, of disclosing her hand and revealing her play, she discreetly kept her own

counsel, and contented herself by giving those directions to Edgar for the regulation of their journey so as to allow her a sufficient time to see her doctor for certain ailments of her own, for which she had previously consulted him. Of course Helen would accompany her to Dr. Fleam's, and when once they were there Mrs. Melladew's course was clear and simple.

They had some miles to drive from the manor to the nearest station, and Hopshire was some hours' distance from London; so it was necessary to quit home early in the morning in order that they might be able to leave London by the banker's express at five in the afternoon, and get to Brighton with the more ease and greater speed. As Dr. Tanner Jones had already taken for them lodgings that were free from those objections concerning children and pianoforte-players with which Mrs. Melladew had clogged her conditions for the hire of apartments, they would be enabled on their arrival at Brighton to enter at once upon their rooms without the intervention of a hotel. This was an arrangement which met with Mrs. Melladew's entire approval, not only on the score of expense and the saving of an extra packing and

unpacking of luggage, but also because it would free her from that morrow's hunt after lodgings the prospect of which had usually embittered her first night at a watering place, with the dread of the painful task that awaited her on the following morning. But this she would now be spared, thanks to the friendly offices of Mr. Johnson and his brother-in-law, Dr. Tanner Jones; supposing always that the lodgings taken by the latter were such as would fulfil the description given of them, and would not have to be quitted for others after a brief and unpleasant acquaintance.

Hence it happened that Mrs. Melladew left home for Brighton with greater satisfaction than she had commonly entertained on quitting the manor for a watering place. Her plans were all smoothed into comfortable trim, and she was buoyed by the confident conviction that they were about to visit a spot where the climate would be of the greatest service to her daughter's health, and would check the growth of that disease of which she feared she had perceived the premonitory symptoms. The chief dread that weighed upon her mind was that Dr. Fleam might detect a more advanced stage of the disease than either she or Mr. Johnson had

anticipated; and she looked forward to their interview with the London physician with considerable anxiety and apprehension, which, however, she was very careful to conceal from her daughter. To Helen she spoke of the visit to Pulsover Street as being made for the relief of her own maternal ailments, and did not disclose her play further than to suggest that as Helen did not seem altogether satisfied with Mr. Johnson, it might be as well for her to take advantage of the visit to Dr. Fleam to consult him on the general state of her health. But Helen said that it was quite unnecessary to do this, and gaily professed her perfect confidence in Old Pillbox, although he had stigmatized her as an incipient case and defective in tone. And so the matter dropped between the mother and daughter.

After they had safely reached London, and had made a not very satisfactory luncheon on such things as the proprietors of the railway refreshment room considered to be suitable for the needs of tired and hungry travellers, Edgar was despatched to the Victoria station in charge of Pettifer and the luggage, Mrs. Melladew and Helen promising to rejoin him there at a given time, and not to lose

themselves in the shops or to overstay the hour with Dr. Fleam. The mother and daughter then took their own cab for Pulsover Street, Cuppington Square, Mrs. Melladew in somewhat gloomy anticipation as to the result of the visit, and weaving a wonderfully subtle web in which to beguile Helen into a consultation with the doctor.

Cuppington Square was in the aristocratic region of Belgravia. It was not a very large square, nor was it a very cheerful one to look at, if regarded only in an æsthetic sense. Next to the fitful apparitions of gorgeous footmen airing their lordly calves within the portals of the mansions in which they condescended to dwell, the liveliest-looking bits about the square were the smart patches of gold and colour on the hatchments which at least half-a-dozen of the mansions were accustomed to display at any one period during the season. These gay hatchments appeared to be hung out not so much for the purpose of preaching to the passers-by from the admonitory texts of "Resurgam," "Memento mori," and "Omnia est vanitas," that were emblazoned on their fronts, and reminding them that even in the height of the season there could be a skeleton in the house; but it

seemed as though they were a species of funeral sign-board to advertise the quality of the family housed within. It was as though they would say, "Observe the escutcheon! This is the noted house for twenty quarterings and the finest lineage! No connection with self-made mushrooms and cotton-mill parvenus!"

For, some of these latter, thanks to the talents and industry of themselves or fathers, had accumulated large fortunes, and had already had the audacity to thrust themselves into some of the best mansions of the square, although none of them had yet carried their effrontery to so high a pitch as to presume, on a death in their family, to advertise their new-blown dignity through the painted medium of a hatchment. That mortuary proclamation of pedigree was at present limited, so far as Cuppington Square was concerned, to the families whose lineage demanded long paragraphs in Burke, Dodd, Walford, or Debrett.

Besides its smart hatchments and liveries, there was little of what an artist would call "colour" in Cuppington Square, except, of course, its strong colouring of excessive respectability. It possessed the usual railed enclosure;

but as the square was a small one, its garden was smaller still, and its trees and flowers were neither very green nor very bright, so that the little ladies and gentlemen who were permitted to disport themselves within its precincts were continually being warned by their nursemaids not to soil their nice frocks by futile endeavours to swarm up smoke-begrimed trees. There was the usual strip of dingy lawn, now parcelled out for croquet; and the usual summer-house, wherein the nursemaids could get on by snatches with the reading of their last new sensation novel, in their favourite penny periodical called the *Hair-Lifter*, the authors of whose stories guaranteed at least one sensation in every chapter. It was a publication in great demand in every area in the square, and its successive numbers were looked forward to with the deepest anxiety by the various grades of servants, from butler and housekeeper to page and scullery-maid. More than one page had already been convinced by a perusal of the *Hair-Lifter's* stories that he had been changed in his cradle, and was the rightful heir to large estates and a princely fortune; several footmen, both in and

out of livery, were inflated, through similar means, to an idea that, unless they were cut out by my young lady's groom, they had only to hint at an elopement, and their master's lovely daughter would favour them with her hand in marriage; and more than one lady's maid, who had diligently studied the narratives of the *Hair-Lifter*, was of opinion that although the day was fixed for the union of her young lady with the 'Onrable Dash, the nuptials would be prevented by the sudden appearance of a returned convict or caged madman, who would be discovered to be the real husband of the hapless lady. The stolen joys of these delicious stories of the *Hair-Lifter* made the hours passed in that summer-house in the square some of the pleasantest in the London lives of the nursemaids, though it was cruel to be interrupted by their youthful charges at some thrilling point in their latest story, and be brought back from their fictitious world of romance to the dull realities of common life.

Cuppington Square had also its keeper, in gold-laced hat, blue long-coat and red collar, who was regarded rather in the light of an institution and an ornament than as a necessity, and had been

placed in charge of those Elysian fields, where he was known to mortals under the name of Walker. There was also, on its pedestal, the usual bronze statue, whose features, under the influence of the climate and smoke, had outlived any possibility for identification; but who, perhaps, may have represented the aristocratic genius of the square contemplating the gas-lamp and cab-stand, and mourning for the days of flambeaux and sedan-chairs, ere the cotton-spinners and mushrooms had dared to profane the locality.

Pulsover Street, wherein Dr. Fleam lived, was sufficiently near to Cuppington Square to justify its inhabitants in affixing to their address its aristocratic name. Pulsover Street was, indeed, a street of great respectability and pretensions, and had known better days prior to the Tyburnian and Kensingtonian emigrations. Yet even now it did not injure its quiet respectability by a vulgar display of shops with plate-glass fronts; for, except the chemist at the corner, to whom Dr. Fleam sent many of his patients with their prescriptions, there was no one in the street who exhibited anything like a shop-window—the army tailor, and the dealer in the produce of the dairy,

and the proprietor of the house-of-call for the flunkeys of the district, merely announcing their occupations by brass plates and modest legends; so that the chemist, who had the only shop-window, being semi-professional, was not considered to plebeianize Pulsover Street to so great an extent as to make it utterly uninhabitable by those who enrolled themselves among the upper ten thousand of society.

The cab that carried Mrs. Melladew and her daughter from the railway station took its route through Cuppington Square, and, turning aside into Pulsover Street, drew up to the door on which was a brass plate with the name of Dr. Fleam. That the doctor would be at home and able to receive her, Mrs. Melladew was already aware, as she had made the appointment with him by letter; but they had to wait some little time before they could be filtered through the doctor's dining-room, in which several patients were already assembled waiting their turns for an interview, and practising those various *ruses* to help themselves before their neighbours in which the English people are such adepts. But the doctor's boy in buttons, although he opened his palm to

pieces of silver and his ears to allegations concerning pressing appointments and express trains, was too much the master of a situation of which he could appreciate the value to be beguiled by bribery and corruption into a dereliction of duty. At length, when Helen was quite wearied with mental speculation as to the complaints of the other callers, and with spelling through the three-weeks-old number of *Punch* that the doctor had placed on the table for the beguilement of his patients, the boy in buttons announced to Mrs. Melladew that her turn had arrived, and Helen followed her mother into the doctor's sanctum.

It was a room comfortably fitted up as a study; and, at a large writing-table, was seated the doctor himself, with nothing around him to suggest his profession, unless it could be determined from the stethoscope on the table and the numerous medical works on the shelves. Certainly the doctor's costume would not have denoted the popular physician of the stories in *The Hair-lifter*, who was always clad in a suit of black, antiquely cut, wore a white tie and shirt-frill, and walked about with a solemn air, and with a gold-headed cane to his nose. Dr. Fleam, on the

contrary, was a jovial-looking, red-faced little man, whose very appearance presented a bill of health to his patients; and he was dressed in a loose morning-suit of heather colour, which, before very long, would be doing duty on a Highland moor, when the doctor should be released from London toil and professional cares for his annual autumn holiday. He was partially bald, though not from age, and had acquired his well-earned fame not only by his native talents, but from sheer hard work and continuous application to medical studies and duties.

Having succeeded thus far in getting her daughter safe within Dr. Fleam's sanctum, Mrs. Melladew's course was clear.

"I hope, too, that it may be of benefit to my daughter," she said, when the doctor had brought her interview to an obvious close, and, rising from his chair and handing her a prescription, had politely expressed a hope that she would derive benefit from a sojourn at the queen of British watering places.

"I hope that it may," she said, "for she has been looking far from well, and, I fear, has overtasked her strength. I have had my doubts about

her lungs not being quite as they should be; and, as we are here, I think that it would be better, my dear Helen, for you to consult Dr. Fleam on your own account. It will be far more satisfactory to me, and it may be of lasting benefit to you."

Thus circumstanced, and in the doctor's presence, it was impossible for the young lady to say that it would be throwing away a guinea to consult him for nothing at all. She felt herself to be completely out-generaled; and, before she could frame any effectual denial to her mother's request, the doctor had seated himself at his writing-table, and was putting her through a catechetical examination, and as rapidly scribbling down her replies to his questions. She had barely recovered from her surprise when she found herself persuaded to lay aside her mantle and undo the upper portion of her dress; and in another moment the doctor had his stethoscope at his ear, and was listening to her respiration as he instructed her to assume different positions, and to draw her breath in various ways. It was all great nonsense, Helen thought; and she scarcely knew whether to be angry or to laugh; but the doctor was so gravely professional, and

her mother was evidently so anxiously in earnest, that she was fain to smother her feeling and submit to the ceremony that had been imposed on her.

It was, however, almost too severe a trial for her risible faculties when Dr. Fream, after putting her through a variety of performances, as she considered, in which she had acquitted herself with great success and self-control, brought his examination to a climax by placing the stethoscope against the back of her shoulder, and saying,—

"Will you oblige me by saying 'Nine?' and rolling the 'n' as much as possible. Thus—"

And the doctor illustrated his request by a prolonged "N-n-n—in-n—ne!" which, it was to be presumed, produced a certain effect on certain organs connected with respiration.

Helen thought of Little Dorrit's "Mrs. General," and wondered for a moment whether the "Nine" was in any way intended for the formation of her demeanour, like the "Prunes and Prism" of poor Amy's preceptor. But she conquered, with some difficulty, a rebellious laugh, and, with her back to the doctor, repeated the magical word after his prescribed fashion.

"Again, if you please!" he said, as he removed the stethoscope to the other shoulder.

"N-n-n—in-n—ne!" said Helen, giving a great roll to each "n."

"Once more, if you please," said Dr. Fleam, as he turned her round, and brought his stethoscope to the front. And again Miss Melladew rolled out the word, as she looked down on the little doctor's bald head bent to its listening attitude.

"And yet once again! Thank you!" said Dr. Fleam, as she rolled out "Nine" for the fourth time. He replaced his stethoscope on the table, and sat down and wrote a prescription, while she adjusted her dress to its ordinary appearance. The doctor had looked so grave, that Mrs. Melladew's anxiety for his opinion was rapidly growing greater; and she was turning over in her own mind how she could best send Helen to the cab while she stayed behind for a moment to ask the doctor his candid opinion concerning his daughter, when he prevented her plan and removed her fears.

"I am happy to say," said Dr. Fleam, "that there is, as yet, nothing whatever to cause alarm

in the state of the respiratory organs. There is a little feebleness and lassitude which had better be got rid of, and for which I will give you this prescription, which you can get made up at the chemist's close by, or at Brighton. It is a simple tonic, and will be of service to you. But the tonic of the sea-air will be better still; and I have no doubt but what Dr. Brighton, as Thackeray calls the place—I daresay you will remember the passage in the 'Newcomes'—will complete the cure. Young ladies," said the little doctor gaily, "sometimes get moped in country quarters; and a gay place like Brighton, with its beautiful aspect and sea-air, is highly beneficial in disturbing the stagnancy that frequently accompanies country quiet, and allowing the streams of thought and feeling to flow in fresh channels. If you were really ill, I should scarcely have recommended Brighton; but, as it is, it will suit you admirably. It will give the necessary bracing to the system, and its lively panoramas will prevent you from feeling *triste*. To what part of Brighton do you think of going?"

"A friend—Dr. Tanner Jones, in fact," said

Mrs. Melladew, "has already been kind enough to secure us lodgings in Cliff Place."

"I know Cliff Place, and I know Dr. Tanner Jones," said Dr. Fleam; "and you may safely confide yourself to his skill, if you should have any cause for his professional services. Cliff Place is a very good situation, neither too high nor too low. If it had been too high you would have found it a toil to get up and down to the beach; and if it had been too low, you might have found it objectionable from sea-fogs or saline influence and marine exhalations. I quite agree with Dr. Kebbell's opinion as to the salubrity of that portion of the west cliff; and I think that Dr. Tanner Jones has exercised a wise discretion in selecting a residence for you in Cliff Place. I hope that it will be very beneficial to yourself and Miss Melladew. Thank you! Good morning!" And as he rang the bell, and the boy in buttons made his appearance, his "Order this lady's carriage!" signified to Mrs. Melladew that the interview was at an end, and that she must reserve for another opportunity her protestations of mingled gratitude and joy at his opinion relative to her daughter's

health. So Mrs. Melladew placed the double fee on the doctor's table, and left the room with a lighter heart than she had ever before quitted the presence of Dr. Fleam; while Helen, perhaps for practice sake, murmured the magical word—"Nine."

CHAPTER X.

NO. 105, CLIFF PLACE, BRIGHTON.

AS Mrs. Melladew and her daughter drove from Pulsover Street, and left behind them the aristocratic neighbourhood of Cupping-ton Square, Helen attacked her mother for inveigling her to a consultation with Dr. Fleam. "Oh, you naughty mamma! if I had only known the designs you had upon me! 'Will you walk into my parlour?' said the spider to the fly. I was the poor fly; though I won't say who was the spider."

"It was for your good, my dear," pleaded the mother.

"I know that you did it for the best, dear mammy; and I hope that you will be easier in your mind about me, now that you have heard Dr. Fleam's opinion that there is nothing at all the matter with me."

"But at any rate, my dear Helen, he agreed

with Mr. Johnson, that your system wanted tone."

"Poor Old Pillbox! how pleased he would be to hear that his opinion has been ratified by so high an authority as Dr. Fleam. But I hope that he will give up comparing me to a worn-out piano."

"My dear Helen! Mr. Johnson would never be so rude."

"Then he should not say so much about my being deficient in tone. But if he comes to me again I shall say Nine, and quiet him. Descend, ye Nine!" And thus the young lady rattled on, while their cab rattled over the stones to Regent Street. For of course Mrs. Melladew could not pass through London and have an hour to spare without filling it up by a little shopping, and burthening herself with more luggage to take to a place where she could have made her purchases quite as satisfactorily as she was able to do in the great metropolis.

With the utmost difficulty Helen at length succeeded in extricating her mother from the entanglements of Madame Fripperie's celebrated establishment, where the good lady had placed

herself within a maze of bonnets, caps, plumes, and artificial flowers; and it was only by dint of hard driving that they succeeded in reaching the Victoria Station in time for the express. Edgar had already disposed of their luggage and taken the tickets; and was walking about, as he expressed it, "in a terrible stew," at the non-appearance of his mother and sister. His heated state of mind had been further increased by the troublesome conduct of Pettifer, who, being unaccustomed to railway travelling, was completely off her head, and, after losing herself in the complicated arrangements of the Victoria Station, had finally thought to make herself completely secure by taking her seat in a railway carriage, where she was found by her master just in time to prevent her being carried off to Dover. It was not till the very last minute permitted by the exigencies of the express that Edgar had seated his party in their proper places; and even then it was not done until he had once more extricated the perverse Pettifer from a second-class carriage of the slow train that would follow to Brighton on the heels of their express.

At length, however, Edgar could sink back on

the cushions of his carriage and draw a sigh of relief, as the train slid from beneath the glazed roof of the Belgravian Station, and he knew that Pettifer and all the other *impedimenta* of their journey were duly placed and cared for; and for the next hour and a quarter would be off his hands and mind. While his eyes made a tour of the *Globe* in quest of the news of the day, as detailed in the damp sheet of that afternoon's paper, his mother's thoughts were occupied with her late interview with Dr. Fleam, and Helen was looking out of the window at the pretty Surrey scenery through which they were speeding. Battersea Park, the gravel pits of Wandsworth Common, the trim villas of Balham, Streatham Common, with Mrs. Thrale's white house peeping through the trees, Norwood, the Crystal Palace, and all the pretty scenery of the valley towards Beckenham, were quickly passed in review. Croydon detained them for a minute; and then, never pausing till they had reached Brighton, they flew from Reigate to Hassock's Gate, and were landed safely among the chalky heights of the South Downs.

"We shall require two cabs on account of the

luggage," Mrs. Melladew had said to her son, as they were drawing near to the Brighton terminus.

"There are no cabs in Brighton," said Edgar.

"No cabs in Brighton!" said the astonished Mrs. Melladew; "then, my dear Edgar, why did you allow us to come without the carriage. However are we to get about? are there coaches or Bath-chairs?"

Edgar laughed. "You need not be afraid that there is any lack of what Johnsonians would call vehicular accommodation in Brighton. In addition to the native produce, there is an annual migration of cabs from London, and hundreds of London cabmen get their Brighton season, like their betters. But no sooner does their cab reach Brighton than it is transformed into a fly, and so I said truly that there was not a cab in Brighton, for every cab is a fly."

"I have often wondered why a hackney carriage should be called a fly," said Helen. "I suppose it was so called in derision, because it never flies, but only crawls."

"No," said Edgar; "that *lucus a non lucendo*

theory will not apply in the present case. The Brighton fly had its name and origin from a Brighton tradesman, who in the early days of the Pavilion and the Prince Regent constructed two sedan chairs on wheels, which were pushed and pulled by the men instead of being carried. The Prince and his companions greatly patronized these two-wheeled sedan chairs when they went out for their evening diversions, and they dubbed the two conveyances by the name of 'fly-by-nights.' They soon became fashionable, and a London coach-maker improved upon them, and adapted them to be drawn by horses. The original name stuck to them, but was abbreviated to its first word 'fly;' and there you have the origin of the Brighton fly, as distinguished from the London cab. And now you will see that the only difference lies in the name, for here we are at Brighton."

So Edgar ordered two flies—or flys, if that is the correct way to spell the word; and it has the authority of Thackeray, who, in speaking of that "best physician our city has ever known, kind, cheerful, merry Dr. Brighton," to whom Dr. Fleam had referred Mrs. Melladew, adds, "No fly so pleasant as Brighton flys." In two flies,

then, the Melladew party and their load of luggage were rattled down the Queen's Road, and in due course arrived at their destination, No. 105, Cliff Place, whose landlady, Mrs. Harpeyden, was expecting their arrival. The white houses on either side of the road in Cliff Place rose sharply one above another, as though they were the wide steps of a steep terrace traversing the front of the western cliff at right angles from the sea. The fronts of the greater number of these houses diversified their forms and increased their amplitude by a series of semicircles of bow-windows, which on the drawing-room floor were girt in by balconies of various designs, covered with awnings of equally diverse patterns. Each house had a slight frontage, separated from the pavement by an ornamental stuccoed wall, and filled with small shrubs and flowers, whose colour and verdure very agreeably relieved the monotonous white of the houses. Within these little gardens was the area approach to the basement story, where the landladies lived and conducted the cookery and other departments. Each front door was raised to the height of several steps above the level of the foot-pavement, so that the

tenants of the ground-floors were enabled to look over the little gardens and into the road from a pleasant elevation. These were "the parlours," in landlady language, but the Melladews were "the drawing-rooms." The evening sun was irradiating Cliff Place as they drove up to No. 105; all looked bright and gay, and, as Mrs. Melladew observed, "clean and respectable." Her first impressions of the locality were exceedingly favourable, and she agreed with Dr. Fleam, that Dr. Tanner Jones had exercised a wise discretion in engaging their lodgings in that part of Brighton.

Mrs. Harpeyden received her new lodgers in the narrow hall, and, while Edgar remained below to see after the luggage, escorted the ladies to the drawing-room. It was of a tolerable size, and was well furnished. Its large bow-window came down to the floor and opened out on to the balcony, and folding-doors divided it from a second room at the back, which they were to make their breakfast and dining-room. Their bedrooms were over these, and thither Mrs. Melladew made an ascent with the landlady to inspect the beds, and to her great relief found them looking very clean.

"I suppose you have not any—eh?" said Mrs. Melladew, making a suggestion of creeping things. It was a question that she invariably asked under similar circumstances, and to which she always received the same stereotyped kind of reply.

"Oh dear no, madam!" replied Mrs. Harpeyden, who was tall and thin, and wore glasses, and had large black eyebrows and a great deal of bushy black hair, and a general blackness both of countenance and costume, and a solemnity of manner and speaking that was especially depressing. "Oh dear no, madam! I am exceedingly particular. Occasionally a lodger has introduced them in his luggage—unknowingly I am sure, for I should be sorry to harshly judge any of my fellow-creatures; but they have probably met with them in the railroad or the fly, just as you might do. I always institute a very rigid examination after a lodger has left me, and everything is done that care and prudence can suggest. I had a carpenter to take this bed to pieces yesterday, so that you need be under no apprehension, madam, except so far as regards your own railway journey; for, however careful we may be

ourselves, it is impossible for us to guard against the delinquencies of others."

"I have more than once suffered so much from these troublesome pests in sea-side lodgings that it makes me very timid," murmured Mrs. Melladew, as a sort of apology for any wounded feelings that the landlady might have received from her attack.

"I am not surprised at it, madam," said Mrs. Harpeyden. "May I ask if they were Brighton lodgings?"

"No, this is my first visit to Brighton."

"Oh, indeed, madam!" Mrs. Harpeyden's manner of speaking was solemn and depressing, but it was with joyous alacrity that she registered a mental memorandum of the admitted fact that her lodger was now about to make her initiatory acquaintance with Brighton apartments and Brighton prices.

"I have partly come here," said Mrs. Melladew, gratuitously explanatory as to the motives of her visit, "on account of my daughter's health."

"The poor young lady!" sighed Mrs. Harpeyden. "Dr. Tanner Jones mentioned her case when he engaged the apartments. Ah, madam!

we have many who come to Brighton for their health, and those who do so should always take up their residence in a house like this, in a quiet situation, where they will receive every comfort and attention, and enjoy the sea-breeze from the open window without the trouble of moving from the room, and where, too, if an afflictive Providence should lay them on a bed of sickness, they can be waited upon by one like myself, who has had so much experience in illness—not in myself though, but in others."

"Oh, indeed!" said Mrs. Melladew, not paying, it must be confessed, much attention to her landlady's monologue, as she moved into the other bedroom, designed for Helen, and closely scrutinized its appointments.

"Yes, madam," said Mrs. Harpeyden, determined to make the most of the present opportunity in impressing her lodger with a due sense of her dignity; "my dear departed husband was a medical man. Yes, madam; I never thought that I should be reduced to keep apartments, but I have many mercies vouchsafed to me, and I do not wish to repine. Poor Mr. Harpeyden died within three years of our marriage, leaving me

one child, who has also been removed from my side to a better sphere. As my husband had been unable to accumulate an independence, I was obliged to put out my little all to the best advantage, and was persuaded to invest it in taking this house and furnishing it for lodgers. But it is a poor livelihood after all. Perhaps my drawing-rooms are vacant five or six months in the year, and my parlours only fill at a reduced price, and I pay a very heavy rent. But I have a good connection and am well spoken of, and I have much to be thankful for, although I never thought to be reduced to this. Yes, madam, the maid's room is on the next story, if you will have the goodness to follow me."

Mrs. Melladew had vainly endeavoured to cut short the thread of the narrative by asking questions as to the linen and sheets. Mrs. Harpeyden answered the queries concisely, and then caught up the thread of her story and carried it on as though no irrelevant remarks had been made.

"Yes, madam," resumed the landlady, as she continued her tale in the upper story designed for Pettifer the maid, and took up a fixed position between Mrs. Melladew and the door, in order not

to allow her victim to escape until she had concluded her biographical sketch; "yes, madam, although reduced to let apartments, I am the widow of a medical man, and on my own side come of a very good family. My mother sprang from one of the oldest Scotch families, the Birds of Ayr; and my father was a solicitor, a Myth, son of the Rev. Mr. Myth, who was rector of Squashton-in-the-Thistles, Clayshire, who was presented to his living by his cousin, the Archdeacon of Blankton. And my great-uncle was the celebrated theologian Dr. Myth, who was the Dean of St. Vitus. Yes, madam,"—and Mrs. Harpeyden spoke with a solemnity befitting so momentous a statement,—"although by the dispensation of Providence I am reduced to let apartments, yet I am the great-niece of a dean, and on my parents' side was not only a Myth, but related to the Birds of Ayr." This volunteered biographical sketch was Mrs. Harpeyden's grand *coup d'essai* on her lodgers, and it produced the desired effect on Mrs. Melladew; for it was very difficult to object to anything in the apartments let by the great-niece of a dean, who, as grand-daughter, daughter, and wife, had been so

intimately connected with the three learned professions, and who, moreover, was herself a Myth, and connected on the maternal side with the Birds of Ayr.

Under the circumstances of her birth, pedigree, and alliances, it really seemed quite a condescension that the grand-niece of a dean should descend to such minutiæ of housekeeping as the particulars of the kitchen-fire, and of an extra charge of sixpence a day if a lady wished for a late dinner; also, that gas was an extra, if she desired it lighted in the bracket in the lobby, and in the chandeliers in the drawing-room and dining-room; also, that there was an extra charge for washing the sheets and table-linen; also, that blacking the gentleman's boots would be an extra; also, that the use of the castors and a few other trifling things would be treated as extras, and were not reckoned in the usual charge for the apartments. It seemed quite a condescension that the grand-niece of a dean should receive Mrs. Melladew's wishes on such common things as these; and it was with some little deference to her landlady that Mrs. Melladew mentioned that she should prefer dining about half-past six, if it was quite conve-

nient to Mrs. Harpeyden, and paying the extra charge for the use of the kitchen-fire.

Mrs. Harpeyden replied that the late dinner-hour would be quite convenient to her, more especially as her parlours dined at two o'clock. But she assured Mrs. Melladew that, although these parlours feasted at such an unfashionable hour, yet they were perfectly respectable people—two maiden ladies, who had been with her for three seasons, and from whom Mrs. Melladew would not receive the slightest annoyance.

"For this evening," Mrs. Melladew said, "we shall be contented with tea; as we took a substantial lunch as we came through town; and, after our long day's journey, we shall enjoy a meat-tea. I will trouble your servant to assist in undoing a hamper, as I have brought some fowls and ham ready cooked, which I should wish brought up for tea. I have also brought tea and sugar with me; and I daresay you will be kind enough to provide us for the present with bread, butter, and milk or cream."

Mrs. Harpeyden promised to do so until the lady, if she preferred it, could order her own things from such tradesmen as she thought best—a sug-

gestion which Mrs. Melladew intended to carry out. Mrs. Harpeyden also said that Mrs. Melladew could make use of the tea-caddy and chiffonier in the dining-room, which she would find provided with keys—though she neglected to state that she also possessed duplicate keys, and availed herself of many pickings and stealings from her lodgers' stores, notwithstanding the fact of her connection with the three learned professions—the Dean of St. Vitus, the Myths, and the Birds of Ayr. But these pickings were probably some of those extras which, by the force of habit, she had learned to look upon as perquisites.

"There are also a few other things in the hamper," said Mrs. Melladew, "which I should wish to give into your charge. Perhaps you will be good enough to see that they are placed in the larder, or somewhere out of the way of the cat."

At this significant reference to that terrible animal, the lodging-house cat, from whose devastating ravages Mrs. Melladew had frequently been a heavy sufferer, the worthy lady beat a hasty retreat down stairs, without pretending to obsêrve

Mrs. Harpeyden's offended dignity at the implication conveyed in her words, or the wound that her Parthian dart had dealt to the susceptibilities of that reduced gentlewoman, the grand-niece to the Dean of St. Vitus.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MELLADEWS VIS-À-VIS.

"WELL, mamma, what did you make of the landlady? you had quite a confab with her," said Helen Melladew, not long after they had arrived at Cliff Place and had got their luggage safely upstairs. Helen had left Pettifer at work in her bedroom, unpacking her boxes and putting out her things, and had come into her mother's room through the door of communication between the two apartments. Mrs. Melladew was busily engaged at her own luggage.

"Had you not better let Pettifer do all this for you, mamma, and come down and get some tea, after we have freed ourselves from travelling dust? The girl has just brought up some hot water. The rooms seem comfortable, and it will be nice having this door: we can leave it open at night, and one night-light will serve for both."

Then Mrs. Melladew told her daughter her impressions of the landlady. "Though I think," concluded the good lady, "that I am sorry she has been so well connected, and the great-niece of a dean. I scarcely liked giving her a hint about the cat; and I saw that she did not at all approve of it. It would be rather disagreeable to suspect a well-connected person of such paltry pilferings as some of our previous sea-side landladies have been addicted to; and it would be worse to accuse her of such things. But I thought it best to show her that I was aware such things were done; and that although she was descended from a celebrated Dean and theologian, and appeared herself to be a religiously-disposed woman, yet that it was better to show her that I was on my guard. But the lodgings appear to be desirable ones, and well situated; and I am sure that we ought to feel indebted to Mr. Johnson and Dr. Tanner Jones for securing them for us, and sparing us the expense and double unpacking of going to a hotel."

"I wonder where Mrs. Harpeyden's sea-view is!" said Helen Melladew, when they had assembled in the drawing-room for tea, and she looked

from the balconied bow-window across the street to the opposite white cemented houses, each with its own bow and balcony, and each rising step-like above its southern neighbour with the sharp slope of the cliff.

"Mrs. Harpeyden's sea-view is a myth!" said Edgar.

"By the way," said his mother, "Mrs. Harpeyden is a Myth, and the grand-niece of Dr. Myth, the Dean of St. Vitus."

"Tell that to the marines," said Edgar.

"But she told me so, my dear," said his mother.

"She also told you that there was a sea-view," was the son's reply; "and the sea-view is a delusion and a snare."

"But there is the sea!" pleaded Mrs. Melladew in her landlady's defence.

"Yes," replied Edgar, "there is certainly a fragmentary glimpse of ocean, thou mighty monster, shining among the chimney-pots; and, by standing quite close to the front of the bow-window, and looking down the long perspective of Cliff Place and across the King's Road, we can actually get a slice of a view of salt

water, and occasionally see a boat or fishing-vessel gliding across the aperture. Certainly, so far, Mrs. Harpeyden's promise of a sea-view is fulfilled. But, after all, I don't know if this situation is not preferable to being in rooms that immediately face the sea, like those in the King's Road or Esplanade. In the first place, the heat there is so intolerable that the King's Road is by no means slandered by its *sobriquet* of Frying-pan Road; and then the glare from the sea is so great that you must pull the blinds down to get rid of the sight of the water which you have come to enjoy; and if you have to do this, you don't get much advantage from your sea-view. To have before your eyes a boundless expanse of water blazing in the sun, reflecting its dazzling light as though from a mirror, and trembling in a thousand flashes, is not only rather more than can be borne by what Sam Weller would call a reasonable pair of optics, but is also apt to produce corresponding tremors in the region of the stomach."

"My dear Edgar, how dreadfully you talk!" remonstrated his mother, who had been making tea, and was passing in and out of the inner room —which, for the present, was made a part of the

drawing-room by its opened folding-doors—where she was taking stock of the tea-caddy and cheffonier, and looking to their locks and capabilities.

"At any rate, mamma," said Helen, "Edgar's account shows that we are better situated here than if we had been immediately opposite to the sea."

"Where, too, the lodgings are usually dearer," said Edgar; "and where you most undoubtedly would be tired to death by the noise of the gay traffic, even if you survived the heat and glare."

"I am thankful that we are in a quiet part," said Mrs. Melladew.

"Quiet for Brighton, perhaps," said Edgar; "though this is only comparative praise. It certainly seems tolerably quiet just at present: but you had better wait for an hour or two, or for a day's experience, before you decisively pronounce as to its quietude. Quiet and repose are about the last things you must expect to get in Brighton. If hermits were in fashion, and were prescribed a penance that should be least in accordance with their previous life and habits, a month at Brighton would be the most cruel punishment that could be awarded them. But, if

we have not a full view of the sea from this window, but only a slantingdicular one—as the Yankees would say—we can't complain that we have not a full view of our opposite neighbours. We have as complete a prospect of their drawing-room, and of all their doings in it, as they must have of ours and our goings on."

"Yes," said Mrs. Melladew; "it is certainly an objection to these lodgings that they are deficient in privacy."

"Privacy!" echoed Edgar in amazement; "why, my dear mother, who ever expected to find privacy in Brighton? People do not come here for that. They come to see and to be seen—to stare and to be stared at. Why, publicity is courted even in the bathing."

"Oh, Edgar!" remonstrated his sister.

"Well, you'll find it out to-morrow, or whenever you bathe," replied Edgar. "You might as well have your tub in Regent Street in the height of the season, so far as privacy is concerned. Though, perhaps, the Regent Street tub would, practically, be more private than the Brighton machine: because in London the living stream would constantly be flowing past

you, hither and thither; but here, at London-super-mare, this tide of spectators washes up to your feet and there stops; the crowd settles down upon the beach during the bathing hours, and there remains tolerably quiescent until the bathing is over and the machines are hauled up high and dry. No! if you want privacy at Brighton, you won't get it. It would be as ineffectual as Diogenes' search for an honest man."

"At any rate," interposed Mrs. Melladew, "I want my tea, and I do not see why I should not get it. It is quite ready, and I should think that we shall all be glad of it after our journey. Perhaps you would draw that curtain a little bit, Edgar, and let down the blind. The light from the setting sun makes a great glare and dazzles my eyes."

"Privacy! privacy!" laughed Edgar; "I perceive, my dear mother, that you do not wish our opposite nighbours to see us feeding."

"I confess," said Mrs. Melladew, "that I cannot see why we should permit ourselves to be stared at, as though we were beasts. I think, on other evenings, that we must have our tea where

we have our breakfast and dinner—in the inner room. It is very disagreeable to be watched at our meals; there is a rude person staring at us now." Mrs. Melladew referred to a young lady who had appeared at the bow-window of the drawing-room of the house that immediately fronted them.

"But how can she help it," said Edgar, "unless she keeps away from the window altogether? When we go to the window our opposite neighbours might say with equal propriety that we do so in order to stare at them."

"I am sure that we should not be guilty of such vulgarity," said his mother; "although, Edgar, I must say that you are setting us a bad example in staring at that young person."

"That young person, or rude person," said Edgar, "or by whatever name she is known, has disappeared; and although she moved away too quickly for me to see what she was like, I saw quite enough to tell me that she was very pretty, and well worth looking at. So I think it highly probable, my dear mother, that I shall have to offend your susceptibilities very frequently by going to the window to stare at that young person,

or rude person, as often as she deigns to show herself. Whatever may be the deficiency in the sea-view from Mrs. Harpeyden's windows, we shall certainly enjoy from them a beautiful prospect whenever our fair *vis-à-vis* puts in an appearance."

"I wish you would come and cut the chicken," complained Mrs. Melladew from the tea-table; "I am dying for want of something to eat."

"There," said Edgar, as he adjusted the light white window-curtain and venetian blinds, "I have screened you from the setting sun and secured privacy for your end of the room: and, as we must have opposite neighbours, I am thankful, for my own part, that we have got a pretty girl for one."

"Perhaps your eyes deceived you," said Helen, slily; "perhaps she wont bear close inspection; perhaps she is going away in the morning before you are down."

"Treason and jealousy in the camp!" laughed Edgar. "I saw her for a moment, yet methinks I see her now, as she stood within the window, which, for rhyme's sake, I'll call *bough*, as it won't permit me to say *bow*-window. By the way, could not we invent a riddle something about when is a

bow-window not a beau-window?—Do you give it up, mother?"

"I never could understand conundrums!" replied Mrs. Melladew, intent upon her chicken and tea.

"Then I'll tell you," said Edgar; "when it has a belle in it. But you might have guessed the answer from the opportune appearance of our fair *vis-à-vis*, of whom I just caught another glimpse. I think, if I had time allowed me, and received a little encouragement, I could make another riddle about bow-belles, *apropos* to our opposite neighbours."

"Pray don't," pleaded Helen; "the mental exertion might overcome you."

"She must be a rude young person, to persist in staring at us in that way," said Mrs. Melladew, returning to her original proposition.

"Nay, mother," said Edgar; "you are screened from her gaze. If any one is visible to her, I am that person; and I confess that I rather enjoy it."

"She must be a bold young person," said Mrs. Melladew.

"Bold or rude," said Edgar, "she is worth looking at. My eyes don't deceive me, and I feel

sure that our beautiful *vis-à-vis* will bear inspection, however close,—if I can only be sufficiently fortunate to get close enough to make that inspection. Now she vanishes again: the transit of Venus is at an end."

And as they sat at tea in the waning light of a golden sunset, he frequently looked across at the opposite window; but no belle appeared in its bow, nor could he catch a glimpse of his fair incognita. And as the sun went down and the darkness increased, the blinds in the opposite bow-window were drawn by a servant, the gas chandelier —or, to be scrupulously correct, the gaselier—was lighted, and the inmate or inmates of the room were evidently shut in for the night.

CHAPTER XII.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF BRIGHTON.

SETTLING down in strange rooms is not achieved in an instant, except by bagmen and other commercial wanderers who are accustomed to be perpetually on the wing, and to whom one coffee-room in the north or east is the duplicate of another in the west and south. But to ordinary every-day people, who cannot aspire to the rank of bagman, and to whom the sea-side question is the one event of the summer, and the question, "Where shall we go this year?" is an all-important query that is only to be answered after much cogitation, to such humdrum people the first night in new lodgings is apt to bring that unsettled state of mind that begets a feeling of not knowing what to do, or how and when to do it.

To the Melladews, or, at any rate, to the two

ladies of the party, the change of scene, both within and without, at 105, Cliff Place, Brighton, to that which they had left behind them in Hopshire, was very great indeed. From the spacious drawing-room at Melladew Manor, with all its familiar furniture and elegant knick-knacks, to the comparatively narrowed dimensions of Mrs. Harpeyden's apartments, there was a considerable interval of difference; and much more so from the snug privacy of the manor, surrounded by its lawns and gardens, and looking out upon a wooded and wide-stretching landscape, to this Cliff-Place prospect, with its tiers of white bow-windowed and balconied houses. The song of birds, the cawing of rooks, the crow of the pheasant, the lowings and bleatings of the cattle, with no harsher sound than the cry of jays or magpies, or the screaming of the manor peacock,—all this was given up for the discordant yells of fish-women, oyster-vendors, news-boys, nigger balladists, and all other two-legged horrors, who make not only the day but the night also hideous in such a watering place as Brighton. Besides this, there was the exchanging the certainty of home comforts for the doubtful joys of the sea-

side lodging-house. The assumption that you can get anything by paying for it does not take into consideration the fact that there are some things that cannot always be secured for money, and that home comforts and home feelings can only be effectually guaranteed by the familiar home-surroundings. The bride's honeymoon tour, that snaps the chain of all these endearing ties, has its significant use in gradually adapting her mind to the change to her new home, and in reconciling her to its novel scenes and duties. And so one of the chief enjoyments derived from a sea-side visit, or trip to the Highlands or Continent, is attributable to the renovated pleasure with which we welcome the old familiar homes and haunts of our daily life. Sometimes we cannot fully realize a happiness until we have been for a season deprived of it, and the chief pleasure in leaving home is the thought and wish of return.

Everything conspired to make Mrs. Melladew and her daughter quite able to realize the fact that they were having tea in a Brighton lodging-house, and not at that pleasant Hopshire manor where they had that morning breakfasted. For, in addition to the excitement and wrath occa-

sioned in the matron's breast by the thought of being watched while at her meals by rude young persons over the way, and of the pleasurable distraction of mind which Edgar appeared in consequence to suffer, there were other sights and sounds which alike proclaimed the fact that she had voluntarily exchanged privacy for publicity, and quiet for noise. A brass band in the next street could be very plainly heard through the back window of their inner room, rousing tumultuous echoes with the soldiers' chorus in *Faust;* and, just as they had changed that air for another that was if possible more noisy and clamorous, the unmelodious howling and thrumming of a nigger band, stationed under their bow-window, assailed their ears on the other side with a wish to be in Dixie,—a wish that Mrs. Melladew earnestly hoped might be instantly fulfilled to the singers. Her geographical knowledge was inadequate to supply her with the necessary information as to the locality of Dixie, but it was quite sufficient for Mrs. Melladew to infer that it must be some spot that was out of ear-shot of Cliff Place.

Then, before she could finish her tea, the cries of the newspaper boys mingled shrilly with

the sounds of niggers and band, proclaiming "Ev'ning papaw! *Standard, Telegraph, Daily Noos!* fresh noos from America!" and these cries were quickly followed by the far worse and more prolonged yells of the fish-women and oyster-vendors. Then there was a good deal of talking and laughing from the room underneath, where Mrs. Harpeyden's "parlours," the two maiden ladies, were entertaining some friends to tea. It was certainly a novelty to hear the medley of sounds, but the novelty was not very agreeable.

The niggers had gone at last, but only to be replaced by the brass band; the chandeliers had been lighted, the curtains had been drawn, and Edgar had gone out for a stroll and smoke. Mrs. Melladew and Helen could scarcely sit doing nothing but listening to the street noises; all their crochet, knitting, tatting, and other work was not yet unpacked, and they felt too unsettled to read anything in the budget of newspapers, magazines, and Mudie's books that they had brought with them; so there was little left them to do but to see that their maid Pettifer had put away their things in proper drawers, and hung up dresses in the right places. Pettifer having had

her tea, was already at work in her mistresses' bedrooms, placing everything in apple-pie order. They found her thus engaged when they went upstairs.

"Oh, what a beautiful cat!" cried Helen, who had a woman's weakness for that animal, and found Pettifer kneeling at a portmanteau, while a fine black cat rubbed round her and purred a friendly greeting.

"Yes, Miss; he belongs to Mrs. Harpeyden, and made friends with me at once," said Pettifer. "His name's Smoke, and he sat on my lap whilst I had my tea, and then foller'd me upstairs. They say as it's good luck when a cat takes to you of its own accord, and that it's a sign as you must be of a haimable temper.

"Then I fear I am not at all amiable," laughed Helen, as she made a vain attempt to hold Smoke, who jumped from her and returned to Pettifer's side.

"Oh! it's nothing but a saying, Miss Helen, and sayings don't always hold true," said Pettifer, politely desirous that the omen should not affect her young mistress's character. "But it makes it seem more home-like to have a cat about one."

"I shall not want anything more out of that portmanteau till to-morrow," said Helen, "so you had better leave it for to-night. I daresay you are tired with your journey. How did you get on in your second-class carriage from London?"

"Very well indeed, miss, thank you," replied Miss Pettifer, heartily. "The company was pertickler pleasant. Perhaps you may have observed a gent with mustasshers and very large whiskers as was sat in the next carriage to yours."

"I think I noticed him on the platform at the station," said Helen.

"That was the Marquis of Moulting a travelling with his marchioness to Brighton," replied Pettifer, "and the marquis's gentleman and the marchioness's maid was in the same carriage with me."

"Why, you had quite distinguished fellow-travellers," said Helen. "Did they speak to you, and make themselves agreeable?"

"Oh dear yes, miss!" said Pettifer; "pertickler agreeable, especially the marquis's gentleman, who was the very facksy-mile" (by which, it is supposed, Miss Pettifer must have meant facsimile) "of the marquis, whiskers and all, excep'

the mustasshers, which he told me he were forbid to wear, the marquis being afraid of being took for him, which he well might be, being of the same height, and that genteel."

"I wonder," said Helen, "in what form his civility displayed itself?"

"Chiefly in walnuts, miss," replied the maid.

"In walnuts!" echoed Helen, surprised at this novel manifestation of politeness.

"Yes, miss, in walnuts," replied Pettifer. "He had his pockets full of 'em, and we was a-eating of 'em most of the way from London, he a-placing of 'em quite at my service, and peeling of several of 'em for me in the politest way."

"You'll be ill, Pettifer," said her young mistress. "And did the marchioness's maid eat walnuts also?"

"Only a few, miss. I think she were jealous of the attentions that the marquis's gentleman was a-shewing me," simpered Pettifer. "She mostly kep' herself to herself, and looked rather 'auty, and read a library-book. Was you frightened at the tunnels, miss?"

"I was certainly glad when we had got through the Clayton Tunnel, remembering the dreadful

accident that happened there," replied Helen. "Were you alarmed?"

"Indeed I were, miss," said Pettifer. "And what I should have done if it had not been for the marquis's gentleman I don't know. But he were that kind, and—— Now, Smoke! you mustn't play with them ribbins. Perhaps I had better take him down, miss; unless I can be of any service to you?"

And Pettifer, who had broken off very suddenly in the narrative of her adventures—for which, no doubt, she had a constraining motive—left the room with the black cat at her heels. And whether or no the marquis's gentleman evinced to her, during their passage through the Clayton Tunnel, any tenderer manifestation of his feelings than walnuts, peeled or in the shell, remained for the present a secret locked within the recesses of Pettifer's breast.

To lounge about up and down stairs, in an unsettled state of mind, with nothing particular to do, was rather stupid work; and Helen Melladew was by no means sorry when she heard her brother return from his ramble and call to her,—

"Put on a bonnet and shawl, Nelly! and come and look at the sea by moonlight. It is glorious! Unless you are too tired from your journey, half an hour's stroll before turning in for the night will do you good. There are heaps of people walking about in the King's Road."

Helen was delighted; a walk by the sea-side by moonlight would be charming.

Mrs. Melladew thought that it would be highly imprudent; and it was not at all the sort of thing that Helen was accustomed to at home.

"But there is no sea there," pleaded Helen.

"Yes; but, my dear, you must remember your delicate state of health," urged her mother.

"Oh! mamma, when I can say 'Nine!'" laughed Helen.

So she was permitted to go, with an injunction to keep her veil down, protect her mouth from sea fogs, and not to stay out for more than half an hour. Then they went down to the King's Road, and Helen Melladew received her first impressions of Brighton.

The long lines of houses were looking whiter than ever in the silvery moonbeams, as they

stood out against the deep violet of the sky with a sepulchral clearness that was almost startling. Whichever way Helen looked, the houses seemed to stretch out into the far distance, and conveyed the idea of a sea-fronted city of illimitable extent. To the east, the moonlight fell clearly on the cliffs towards Beachy Head, and their chalky walls appeared to be a continuation of the white line of houses at Kemp Town. To the west, the houses at Hove and Cliftonville seemed to be continued, without a perceptible break, to the towns of Shoreham and Worthing, whose lights twinkled at the farther horn of the crescent bay. Nowhere else in Great Britain could a similar scene be witnessed, and it made a powerful impression on Helen's mind. And even when, on the following day, she came to look on the same view without its magical accompaniment of moonlight to add illusion to the scene, yet her first sensations as to the wonderful extent of Brighton, although corrected, were not obliterated. England can show no other spot where a continuous line of white houses, the greater number of which are of palatial appearance and dimensions, stretches for three miles along the sea-cliffs, and

is backed up by a mass of streets and squares forming a town large enough for the habitation and requirements of more than eighty thousand residents, and more than one hundred thousand visitors. Brighton, in fact, is ten or twenty watering places rolled into one; it is London-super-mare, quite as much from its plethoric size as from its locality and patrons; and it is so much larger, grander, and gayer than all other sea-bathing resorts in Britain, as to well deserve its title of their queen.

It is stated by Mrs. Merrifield, in her *History of Brighton*, that "the Old Steine was originally very different in appearance from what it is now," —an observation which scarcely admits of contradiction, and which may similarly be applied to every other portion of the town. And the visitor, without mentally plunging into the remotest history of the place, when the British chieftain was buried in the soil that should afterwards form the rosary of Palmyra Square, and the Roman camps and coins covered the ground where Romanist ceremonies should in after centuries be held; and passing over that later period of the dubious Bishop Brighthelm, and the Brighthelmstone of

the Normans and Flemings, and consigning them all to the misty regions of dryasdust annals, the visitor may content himself with the general assurance that the spot "was originally very different in appearance to what it is now," and that Brighton was invented, at the close of the past century, by his Royal Highness George Prince of Wales; and that the original invention, not having been shut up by a close patent, has been gradually improved in every successive year, until it has reached that completeness and perfection in which it may now be seen. The fishing-village of Brighthelmstone bears even less resemblance to the fashionable town of Brighton than does the Brighton bathing-woman of the Saturday morning to the same individual when, on the following day, transformed by her Sunday finery, she attends her favourite Ebenezer.

Helen Melladew was charmed with the scene. The brightness and stillness of the night, and its delicious coolness after the sultry heat of the day, had attracted out-of-doors nearly as many ladies as gentlemen; and the wide Esplanade on the King's Road was thronged with promenaders. She could scarcely realize the fact that

she was mingling in that gay assemblage by the margin of the moonlit sea, and that it was only a few hours, and not days, since she had left the rural solitude of home.

"How nice it is!" she thought. "I do hope that he will come! I am sure that he would like it, and that it would do him good. Poor Mr. Pordage! I sincerely hope he may soon be well. I wish he had not played at croquet."

From which words it might be inferred that Miss Melladew's happiness at Brighton would not be quite complete unless Mr. Pordage was able to join their party. But, as language is serviceable for the concealment of thought, there was room for the probability that the young lady's reflections were divided between the rector of Melladew and his curate,—a surmise which would receive confirmation from the circumstance that the rector had never expressed any intention of visiting Brighton, whereas his curate had been talking of so doing.

But, however this may have been, it is certain that among the thoughts that crossed Helen Melladew's mind that pleasant summer night, as she strolled with her brother among the prome-

naders in the King's Road and made her first moonlight acquaintance with Brighton, although the portly form of the Rev. Pursey Pordage was present before her mind's eye, yet it was but a subsidiary figure to the picture in which the greatest prominence, and highest light, and warmest colouring, and most delicate treatment, were lavished by the fair limner on another manly form, more attractive and acceptable to the artist. Very popular indeed is the picture-gallery of Fancy. Kensington and the Academy, and the two Water-colours, and the British Institution, might combine their forces in vain, for they would fail to achieve those triumphs that are daily won by the paintings of Imagination. And although, in Fancy's pictures, the colours may not be permanent, yet they have one great advantage over other fleeting canvases, in the renovation or replacement by new and equally popular designs.

What were the pictures that were hung that evening by Ellen Melladew in the gallery of her fancy, was perhaps never known to other than herself; but that they were very bright and pleasant ones we may be sure, from the happy look that was beaming on her face, not only when

she returned from her moonlight stroll, and pronounced Brighton the most charming of watering places, but also some two hours afterwards, when she had sunk to sleep in Mrs. Harpeyden's bed, and her mother stole in quietly to see her.

"She looks happy," thought Mrs. Melladew. "It must have been a relief to her to hear Dr. Fleam's opinion. I am thankful that she saw him." And, shading the night-light from Helen's eyes, the fond mother went back into her own room, there to say her prayers, and acknowledge her gratitude for that health which had seemed to be promised to her daughter; while Helen lay in slumber that was too deep and tranquil for dreams. The pretty artist was too tired to paint any more pictures for Fancy's gallery.

CHAPTER XIII.

MORNING REFLECTIONS.

"I HOPE you had a good night, mother, after your journey?" inquired Edgar, when he came down to breakfast the next morning, and gave his mother and sister his accustomed salutations.

"Well," said Mrs. Melladew—as people usually do say when they require a preface to anything that is not well—"it was not a very good night. But I could scarcely expect it to be. I never sleep well the first night in a strange bed; and the bed was rather hard."

"So was mine," said Helen.

"And so was mine," also said Edgar. "But you say rather hard. Now mine was very hard; and, I should imagine, was stuffed with stones from the beach. I am not a Sybarite, and would not think of complaining if a few rose-leaves

were crumpled; but I certainly don't altogether admire sleeping on shingle, in order to keep up the idea that one is at the sea-side. I am as stiff as a biscuit; and might have been in the saddle for six or seven hours, bumping up and down the Brighton downs after the Brookside harriers. I should like to give old Mother Harpeyden a bit of my mind on the subject."

"Pray don't, Edgar," cried Mrs. Melladew, in some alarm, lest her son should carry out his threat. "If any one speaks it should be me. We must spare her feelings as much as possible, and remember that she is a reduced gentlewoman and the great-niece of a dean."

"Bother the dean!" cried Edgar, as he sat at the breakfast-table and cracked his egg.

"My dear Edgar!" remonstrated his mother, whose veneration for the Established Church would not permit her, without a loss of equanimity, to hear any of its high officials contemptuously spoken of.

"What has her pedigree to do with her beds?" asked Edgar. "So far as we are concerned, she is nothing more than a lodging-house keeper.

These eggs are not fit to eat! They must have been boiled in cold water."

"They do wonderful things in lodging-houses," laughed Helen; "but I should scarcely think that they could boil eggs in cold water, out of Ireland."

"I certainly think," said Mrs. Melladew, as she examined one of the dishes, "that she has not sent up all that remained of the fowls. I know there were two wings and one breast left; and I only see one wing,"

"Of course the cat has eaten it," said Edgar. "A dean's great-niece is above suspicion."

"And I had told her to grill the legs for your breakfast, Edgar," continued his mother. "But perhaps that was her servant's fault. But I will speak to her about the beds. Some people prefer to sleep on mattrasses, and I daresay Mrs. Harpeyden thought that we did. One thing is very evident—we are expected to get up early, and not to lie in bed after seven o'clock; those dreadful fish-women would prevent any one sleeping after seven."

"Yes," said Helen to her brother; "and, as the door between mamma's room and mine was open, I had the benefit of the noise. I slept

very well the first part of the night; but when I awoke and found my bed so hard I could not make myself comfortable. At last I got tired-out by short uneasy sleeps, and my poor bones were just beginning to accommodate themselves to the mattrass, and I was just falling off into a nice doze to dream of dear old Melladew,"—here the young lady either used language to conceal her thoughts, or suppressed some of her fancies,—"when a horrid yell awoke me, and so frightened me that I instantly thought of fire and all sorts of dreadful things. But before I could quite gather my senses I heard more cries, and made out the words, 'D'ye want any fresh prawns this morning, ma'am?' So I knew where I was. Their cries were continuous until half-past eight o'clock, when the newspaper boys came, and made equally disagreeable noises bawling out their morning papers. I wonder that such nuisances should be allowed."

"I suppose, my dear," said Mrs. Melladew, proffering an improvised and perfectly unauthorized explanation, "that, as Brighton is only a watering place, there are no what's-its-names—mayor and magistrates, like there are in other towns, to

give orders that these disagreeables should not be repeated."

"No mayor!" exclaimed Edgar; "oh, indeed, but there is, and a very fine mayor too! The last time that I was here I happened to go to a public meeting, and Mr. Mayor was in the chair, with a scarlet robe and no end of a gold chain. But, at any rate, the authorities have taken one or two steps for the suppression of nuisances; for, in addition to certain bathing regulations, they have put a stop to barrel-organs, which, I should fancy, Mrs. Harpeyden must have included among those mercies for which she could not be sufficiently thankful. Yet I must say that I think it rather hard upon the organ-grinders to be banished from Brighton, and that the magisterial ostracism should not be extended to their fellow-musicians and torture-grinders with banjoes and Nebuchadnezzar instruments, to say nothing of the fish-vendors and offenders."

"But," said Helen, "as your bedroom was at the back of the house, you must have been comparatively quiet."

"Comparatively, perhaps," rejoined her brother; for I only heard the distant sounds of the fish-

fags and the newspaper boys. But, although I escaped the one infliction, I fell in for a milder evil. That space of ground which we see from this back window, and of which my bedroom window commands a still nearer view, belongs to a school, as you may judge from that tall black wall and wiring for a fives court, and those poles and bars for gymnastic exercises. They went into school while I was dressing, and are allowing us to breakfast in peace; but if you had heard the row that they made at seven o'clock this morning, you would have thought that Bedlam had broken loose, and that ever so many Macbeths were murdering sleep. Then their bell was set clanging more than once; and the large Newfoundland that you see chained to the kennel at this corner of the playground howled and barked at intervals in a peculiarly offensive and aggravating way. People who live in a quiet street in Brighton are evidently not expected to look for quiet between seven in the morning and ten at night."

"I wonder if this was where little Paul Dombey went to school?" said Helen, as she looked from the back window on to the playground.

"No," replied her brother; "I fancy that we must look for Dr. Blimber's elsewhere. And we have a pretty good latitude in our choice, for there are upwards of two hundred schools in Brighton, half of them being for girls."

"I don't wonder at so many schools being here," said Mrs. Melladew. "Half the children are sent for the sake of the climate and sea-air. You will remember, Helen, that Mrs. Mapleson sent her little boy here for that very reason."

"Yes," replied Helen, "he was a poor delicate fellow, like dear little Paul, and the waves told him a similar tale."

"I should suppose that Dr. Blimber's young gentlemen were not allowed to unbend to the recreation of cricket," said Edgar; "but when you come to drive about the outskirts of Brighton, you will see cricket-grounds in all directions, and would be surprised at their number if you did not remember the number of the schools."

"Will you come marketing with me this morning, Helen?" asked her mother. "I must find out a butcher, and fishmonger, and baker, and, I suppose, a pastry-cook as well; for perhaps it will be as well not to trouble Mrs. Harpeyden

with anything except puddings: her pastry may not be very light."

"If you want butchers and bakers and candlestick makers," said Edgar, "you will find scores of them close at hand in the Western Road. I will be your guide, if you like."

"If you would I should be very glad," said his mother.

"You will do very well in the tart line at Bollen's," said Edgar, "if you prefer your shops all together; but, for old acquaintance sake, I have a weakness for Mutton's."

"What a queer name!" cried Helen.

"You will find many queer names in Brighton," observed her brother. "Nye Chart, the lessee of the theatre, for example, who is one of the best burlesque actors that I have seen. And what do you think of Chilmaid and Tinkler, the drapers near 'The Ship'? Dickens himself could scarcely have coined a funnier conjunction of names."

"Muttons is a very good name for a butcher," said Helen.

"Yes," replied Edgar; "only the Brighton Muttons does not happen to be a butcher, although, I daresay, he would supply you with

cold mutton in the shape of choice legs of Southdowns, cooked and garnished with turnip, tulips, and beet-roses."

"Who or what is Mutton's, then?" asked Helen.

"Mutton's is the chief confectioner's shop in the King's Road," answered Edgar. "Mutton's, in fact, is more than a confectioner's; for it deals in wines and spirits, has no end of eating-rooms, and keeps a hotel. Mutton's is an institution of Brighton, and as much identified with it as Brills, the Pavilion, the Downs, or the old chain-pier. You will get everything there, from a penny bun to a wedding-cake, from a bottle of sherry —which, by the way, I don't advise you to get, for you would have to pay six shillings for it— to a five-shilling basin of turtle-soup; and as to tarts and cheesecakes, and meat-pies and tongues, and veal-cakes and potted meats, and all that sort of thing, you have only to pay your money and take your choice. I will take you to Mutton's at once, if you like; for I want to go to Booty's."

"Another queer name," said Helen. "It sounds as though it should belong to a shoemaker."

"It is a circulating library, with a circular window," said Edgar. "I want to order the *Times* from somewhere. They hire out newspapers in Brighton; and the boys leave them for the various readers at nine in the morning and call for them again at eleven, for which they charge twopence. As the full price of the *Times* is but threepence, and as each hired-out copy probably goes to three or four readers, and is then posted to some one else at half-price, I wonder what the profits are upon each copy? about as much, I should fancy, as on the six-shilling sherry."

"I am going to get ready," said Mrs. Melladew, as she left the room, "and shall speak with Mrs. Harpeyden down stairs. Perhaps you will join me in the hall. It will save me coming up stairs again."

"I wonder if my beauty is on view this morning?" said Edgar to his sister. "Come and have a look, Nelly; you won't be a minute putting your hat on." And they went into the front drawing-room to have a look across the way; but no one was visible in the opposite drawing-room. It was clear, however, that its occupants had not left, for

there was a work-table at the open window, and some tokens of feminine life were scattered around; moreover, the usual announcement of "Apartments to Let" was not protruded from the balcony.

Early as it was in the day, an instrument of torture was already at work beneath their window. The torture-grinder was an Italian boy who carried a wretched attempt at a harp, on whose jangling wires he twanged a few notes, and then twanged them over again without the slightest attempt at the indication of a tune. The reiteration of his terribly monotonous performance must have been inexpressibly painful to any invalid or nerve-afflicted person who was unhappily within ear-shot; a barrel-organ, however bad, would have been infinitely preferable; and yet, while the local authorities (very properly) suppressed the organ-grinder, they permitted the torture-grinder to come under any other aspect and to do his worst. It was really a relief to have this miserable harpy's noise partially drowned by an influx of newspaper boys shouting their cries of "Morning papaw! *Daily Telegraph! Standard! Brighton Examiner!*" for the replacing of one evil by

another varied the dread monotony of the punishment, even as the torture of the thumb-screw was pronounced by a certain martyr to be an agreeable change from the prolonged agonies of the rack.

"A good idea!" cried Edgar, as he hailed a boy. "I shall find out my beauty's name from the visitors' list in the Brighton paper. Here, my lad, give me a *Telegraph* and *Brighton Examiner*. Stand on the top step of the next house and hand the papers up to me. And how uncommonly easy it would be," he added, to his sister, as the boy quickly complied with his instructions, "for a burglar to do the same. If he stood on that balustrade he could easily swing himself into the balcony of the house next below, and then, passing from one balcony to another, he could make a clear sweep of half the houses in the street. As there are no shutters to these windows, and no fastenings worth speaking of, there would be no difficulties in a burglar's way."

"Pray don't suggest such a thing to mamma," said Helen, "or she will not have a moment's peace of mind. And, for my own part, I will

take care to keep under lock and key, and in my own bedroom, everything that I value."

"Including yourself, lest any one should elope with you," laughed Edgar. "Now for the paper. Here we are! 'List of fashionable arrivals,' *et cætera*. 'Cliff Place, No. 52;' that's the house. 'Mrs. and Miss Buggins.'" And he dropped the paper with a comical air of disgust.

"What a dreadful name!" said Helen.

"What a comfort to her to think that she may one day change it for a prettier," said Edgar. "But, Buggins! it is a terrible discovery. That a beauty should turn out to be a Buggins! yet 'a rose with any other name would smell as sweet.' But, soft! 'a light through yonder lattice breaks;' it is the east, and Buggins is my sun! There she is; and she is a beauty, despite her ugly name."

"And there is her mother," said Helen. "They are evidently dressed to go out."

"A cat may look at a king, and I shall have a stare at the beauty," said Edgar; "though I wish she would let me have a better look at her. No end of dark hair, I see; and splendid eyes, large, lustrous, dark, and long-fringed. Plenty of

figure, and a small delicate hand, almost too small for the glove that she is now fastening. 'Oh, that I were a glove!' *et cætera.*"

"Hush, Edgar! she will hear you!"

"A clear skin and bright healthy colour; tall, but not a giantess. 'I hate a dumpy woman!' Simply dressed, but evidently the lady. Not a bit like her mother, who is decidedly short, and looks frumpy. Away they go! now they are coming out, and I shall have a better view of her as they come down the steps. No! she provokingly turns her back upon me, that she may help her mother; then puts up her parasol, and it hides her face."

"I think she did it on purpose," said Helen. "I am sure that she saw you staring at her."

"Then it shows that she is a young lady, free from what Mrs. Gamp would call bragian boldness," said Edgar, "which is all the more in her favour. Away they go down to the beach, the wind playing havoc with her drapery as she nears the corner. Puff! it is as much as she can do to struggle on! away they go towards the bathing-machines. The Buggins is lost to sight, although to memory dear."

"What a gusty place Brighton seems to be!" said his sister.

"Yes," replied Edgar; "the winds up these side streets seem to blow from every quarter under heaven. I should advise you, Nelly, to sew some shot round the bottom of your dress; or, as you veer round into the King's Road, you will make yourself 'a study of crinoline' for Leech. But to think that my beauty should be branded with such a name!" he added, as he took up the Brighton paper. "Which her name is Buggins!"

"I am glad you have got a paper," said Helen; "and while I am getting ready you can look through the names of visitors and see if there is any one that we know." So she left him to study the local sheet of news, in which, however, he did not find the names of any of their neighbours or special friends, the Brighton newspapers, of which there were no less than six, not presenting the full and complete list of visitors, as is the fashion with the ordinary watering-place journals, but merely giving a few names here and there, with a limited number of arrivals and departures. The ingenuity of the

chronicler of such events must be severely taxed to overcome the difficulties of repetition in a succession of bald statements that Lord and Lady Blank had arrived at Regency Square or had left Lewes Crescent; and, accordingly, he relieves the monotony of his narrative by saying that all the people with handles to their names are "sojourning at" Palmyra Square, or are "among the fashionables at" the Bedford Hotel, or "among the arrivals at" the York Hotel, or "are expected at" Cavendish Mansion; or are "included in the company at" the Royal Albion Hotel, or have "departed from" Adelaide Crescent, or "occupy" or "have taken" such and such a house; and, in short, have done anything else rather than come to, or go from, their Brighton habitation.* The chronicler of

* The following extract is printed *verbatim* from the "Fashionable Intelligence" in *The Brighton Times*, for July 25, 1863:—"Lord William Powlett has apartments at the Norfolk Hotel. Count Bathyany is expected at the Norfolk Hotel on Monday. Sir Robert Peel, bart., is also expected at the Norfolk Hotel on Monday. Sir Thomas R. Gage, bart., is sojourning at the Royal Crescent Hotel. The Hon. Howe Brown has taken up his terrestrial abode for a transient period at 14, Cavendish Place." There is nothing to indicate that this last statement is intended to be taken facetiously or ironically.

the fashionable arrivals and departures in the queen of British watering places does not trouble himself to give a complete directory of its floating population; and so it happens that thousands of visitors may sojourn for many weeks at Brighton without having their addresses recorded in the visitors' list of the local journals, unless, for any special reason, either they or their landladies take the trouble to send in their names to the proper quarters.

"Mamma has just finished her confab with Mrs. Harpeyden about the hard beds and other matters," said Helen, when she had rejoined her brother; "and she is waiting for us down in the hall. So now you can escort us to that shop with the queer name—Button's, was it not?"

"No," replied Edgar; "though, by the way, Button's is the name of a well-known confectioner's near Temple Bar. But the Brighton shop would not be called Button's, unless you spoke with a cold in your head. It is Mutton's."

"Mutton's! oh, yes! I don't think I shall forget it."

CHAPTER XIV.

"WHAT IS THIS? MUTTON?"

N a flutter of drapery and feelings, the latter being tumultuously raised together with the former, Mrs. Melladew and her daughter struggled round the windy corner of Cliff Place, and were safely landed in the King's Road on their way to Mutton's, but only to undergo similar struggles at intervals as they crossed the several outlets of the streets that ran from north to south.

"I don't wonder," said Helen, as she endeavoured to subdue the surging of her petticoats, and at the same time to preserve her hat in its proper place,—"I don't wonder that people should be sent to Brighton for fresh air, for they certainly appear to get it in any quantity."

"Wait for a sou'-wester," said Edgar, "and

then you will be better able to judge what a wind is like in Brighton."

They passed the Battery and its flag-staff, which had not then been removed from its old position, although it was on the eve of its departure, and had its railed enclosure filled with materials for the building of the new hotel, which was then approaching completion. Its cyclopean pile naturally attracted the attention of the newcomers, and they paused awhile to look up at its nine tiers of rooms, with their elaborate ornamentations and bronzed and gilded balconies, from which the visitors could luxuriate in the lively panorama of sea and land that was spread to their view. But the enormous height of this new hotel, truly named "the Grand," did not meet with Mrs. Mclladew's approbation, and she pitied the poor people who would have to climb to its topmost story, and their dreadful position in case a fire should break out in an intermediate story.

"Oh!" said Edgar, "Mr. Whichcord, the architect, has provided against all emergencies, for the hotel is fireproof throughout. And as to climbing up to the top of it, you may remember

that time when we stopped at Preston on our way back from the Lakes, and went over Horrocks's mill, how we stept into a little room and were immediately wound up to any floor and to any height. They called it a 'lift,' but at this hotel they dignify the machine with the title of the ascending omnibus, having other lifts for sending up luggage and dinners. They adopt the same sort of thing at the Grosvenor and Westminster and all our new hotels, that will soon rival in their bigness the caravanserai hotels at New York; and a famous invention it is. You step into a little room on the ground-floor, and the man in charge of it asks you your number, and before you know where you are you are lifted up to the required elevation, and get there in a much shorter time than if you had been put to the fatigue of walking up-stairs. And the same in coming down, and the same with your luggage, and the same with your dinners; everything goes up in the same way, and the dishes come to you as hot and hot as Mrs. Pipchin could desire, without being cooled in their passage along windy corridors; so that it little matters what story you may be on, or how fat and wheezy or invalidish

you may be, for you can get up to the ninth story as easily as you can to the second. And then think of the sea-view from the balcony, and the bird's-eye view of the beach and thronged Esplanade. The old Norfolk Hotel is to be rebuilt after a similar fashion, and a club-house added. Will you take any shares?"

Mrs. Melladew did not want any shares. She had no desire to be an innkeeper.

"Oh, but it is all the fashion now-a-days," said Edgar. "Among the directors of these companies you will find many of the nobility. Even our shrewd, close-fisted neighbour, Lord Scanthurst, has been bitten with the mania, and you will see his name figuring in the prospectus of the new hotel at Shrimpington-on-the-Sands; and you may depend upon it that it would not be there unless he had a confident expectation of making money by the venture. I rather think of having a few shares in the Norfolk myself; its club will be a good idea."

Mrs. Melladew did not approve of clubs, holding the feminine opinion, that they did more than anything else to destroy the domesticity of the males and fill their minds with anti-nuptial

tendencies; but, for the present, she was obliged to keep her observations in reserve, as the shops which they passed had great attractions for her, and she was not a little hustled by the passers-by, through not keeping her proper side of the pavement. That this pavement should be of common red brick, instead of the ordinary flag-stone, excited the surprise of Mrs. Melladew, in common with every other visitor to so wealthy and fashionable a watering place. The poverty-stricken brick pavements of Brighton must take their place in the Dundreary catalogue of those things which "no fellah can understand."

"Here is Mutton's," said Edgar, as they came to a shop-door whose dark green portal bore the thrilling announcement, "Real turtle-soup always ready." A half-glass door, with a brass plate bearing the magic name of "Mutton," was thrown back and gave admittance to another half-glass door, which opened immediately into the shop, which was long and narrow, and, as Shakespeare's Proteus said, "too small a pasture for such a store of Muttons," and whose practicable area was studded with those attenuated chairs that are only to be met with in shops, and

which are swept hither and thither by the distended dresses of the ladies who come to consume cheesecakes or ices. The shop-window, with its large panes of glass, was guarded by a brass rod that sprang from a brazen plate, inscribed "Mutton, Confectioner," thus presenting, as on a title-page, the name of the author of the works of art within. The lower portion of the window was filled with an appetizing array of chickens, glazed tongues, meat pies, veal-cakes, and hams adorned with parsley and various ornaments in turnip, carrot, and beet-root. In the domed upper portion of the central plate of glass was exhibited a stately bride-cake, flanked by other triumphs of fantastic confectionery and tall glasses containing various coloured sweets and bon-bons. Framed announcements hung from the shelves with the suggestive legends, "Made dishes," "Dinners dressed," "Suppers supplied." Then came a second window, that was filled by bottles of wine drawn up in soldier-like ranks; and on the green pillar that separated the two windows was hung a board setting forth that wines, spirits, and liqueurs, with Bass's and Guinness's ales and porters, might be had within.

Beneath the windows was a balustrade of iron-work, through which ascended from the lower regions warm gushes of odorous soups and pasties; and over the windows was hung an awning, whose scalloped front, as it drooped over the edge of the brick pavement, told to the passers-by that this canvas screened from the sun the "refreshment rooms" of "Mutton and Son, Confectioners to the Queen." Beyond these two windows were others belonging to the hotel portion of the house, in which were the luncheon and dining-rooms. Altogether, Mutton's was, as Edgar had reported it to be, an institution of Brighton.

"Nelly is going on with me as far as Booty's," said Edgar to his mother, "and we will call for you in a few minutes, by which time I daresay you will be able to decide what would be the nicest things to order in."

They had reached the corner of West Street, and Helen had stopped for a moment at Jeff's window, attracted by its display of French novels, while Edgar was strolling quietly on, a yard or so in advance, listening to the pleasant music chimed by the bells of St. Paul's, which is well nigh the

only peal of bells of which Brighton can boast. Two young ladies had just met each other at the street-crossing; and Edgar was so close to them that he could not fail to hear their brief conversation.

"Are you going to Mattins?" asked the first, who had her back turned towards him.

"No, I am going to Mutton's!" laughed the other, a pretty merry-looking girl, whose long brown hair, damp and glistening with the sea-water in which she had just been bathing, was hung out in the sun to dry, by being permitted to fall to its natural length over her shoulders. "Mutton's and Mattins! what a difference!"

"A difference indeed!" said the other, with a tinge of sadness in the tone of her voice; "and I think that it symbolizes the two great classes into which Brighton society seems to be divided."

"Ah! I see what you mean," said the other, gaily; "carnal and spiritual; isn't that it? And I fancy that the majority prefer Mutton's to Mattins."

"I fear that they do," said the other. "But I must not stay. Good-bye! Perhaps you will join me at Evensong." She turned round, in

parting from her companion, and then went up West Street, in the direction of St. Paul's, whose bells were chiming for that church service which is called in the Prayer-book, "Morning Prayer," but which by the sect of Mongrelians is termed "Mattins," notwithstanding the fact that these ecclesiastical half-breeds—the mules of their profession—make it their chief boast that they rigorously adopt, not only the doctrines but also the language of the Book of Common Prayer, which nowhere uses the words "Mattins" and "Evensong" except in an obscure part, at the heading of its table of proper lessons. But the Mongrelians, with their mongrel thoughts and words and ways, having adopted, in consonance with their nature, a form of worship in which the rituals of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism are ingeniously blended, while they are compelled to observe the order of the latter, overlay it as much as possible with the appearance of the former. And thus it happens that the Romanist word "Mattins" is preferred by the sect of the Mongrelians to the simpler English Church title of "Morning Prayer;" for the Mongrelians have naturally a greater affinity to a vocabulary of dog-

latin than to pure English. And the word "Mattins", is recommended to ladies, and to gentlemen of a feminine mind, of whom the sect of the Mongrelians is chiefly composed, by the poetical uses to which it has been put. They remember that Shakespeare's Ghost in *Hamlet* says that "the glow-worm shows the matin to be near," and that Scott speaks of "the early matins of the lark," and that Tennyson sings of "the wild skylark's matin song," and of "the first matin song" that "waken'd loud over the dark dewy earth;" and so they meet with the word so often in a poetical sense that it comes to them steeped with a poetical flavour, and acceptable to the feminine æsthetic mind.

The young lady who, in Edgar Melladew's hearing, had just used the word, evidently had adopted it as though she loved it and recognized the ring of poesy in its sound. But if she also, as she seemed to say, recognized in it a symbol of a certain portion of Brighton society, she must have limited her reference to the sect of Mongrelians, and to that part of the congregation which, from other motives than those of curiosity, attended the one or two out of the two-and-

twenty churches in Brighton which professed to have "Mattins" instead of "Morning Prayer." In Mongrelian eyes, the word Mattins would doubtless symbolize the true Church party in Brighton; while all who were not numbered in the strictest sect of the Anglo-Catholics would be given over to the carnal Mutton's; and as these formed by far the largest section of society in Brighton, the young lady with the dishevelled hair was probably perfectly correct in her surmise that the majority preferred Mutton's to Mattins.

The other young lady, who had expressed her fears that this statement was true, sped quickly up West Street, that she might not be too late for those Mattins which the warning voice of the bells told her were just about to begin; and, as she turned to part from her companion, Edgar had a momentary view of her face. But that moment was sufficient for him to recognize in the fair Mongrelian his *vis-à-vis* neighbour—the beautiful unknown of the opposite drawing-room in Cliff Place. His first impulse was to follow her to her Mattins; but he scarcely liked, on this their first morning in Brighton, to break his promise to his mother and sister; and while he was hesitating

what to do Helen joined him, having finished her inspection of the French books in Jeff's window.

"Did you see that young lady?" asked Edgar.

"Yes," she replied; and then suddenly added, as a thought occurred to her, "dear me! I fancied it was a face that I knew; and now it has flashed across my mind. I do believe it was Kitty Galloway!"

"Who—which—what?" inquired Edgar, incoherently.

"The young lady with her hair over her shoulders who went along the King's Road," replied his sister. "But I only caught sight of her face for an instant, and she was looking in another direction."

"Yes; she is on her way to Mutton's; I heard her say so. So you will see her there presently and discover whether or no you are right in your conjecture. But it was the other one I meant, the one who has just gone up this street. It is our opposite neighbour, Nelly! my beauty. She is a good girl as well as beautiful; for she has gone to church."

"Has she?" said Helen, vacantly, for she was thinking of the young lady who had gone to

Mutton's instead of to Mattins. "Do look in a paper or visitors' list and see if you can find the name of Galloway."

They were now in Booty's shop, where Edgar was giving his order for the *Times* and other papers that he required to be sent to him at Cliff Place. "Here it is!" cried Helen, as she looked through the brief list of names. "Major and Mrs. Galloway, Pavilion Parade. I daresay it is the same; though her father was only a Captain when I knew her."

"When was that?" asked Edgar, as they left Booty's and struggled across the windy opening of West Street on their way to Mutton's.

"Kitty Galloway and I were at school together," said his sister, "when I was at Mrs. Marchmont's. We had beds in the same room and were sworn friends; and after we had left school we kept up a great correspondence; but it gradually broke through——"

"As those things always do," interposed Edgar.

"Yes; but it did not quite die a natural death," said Helen; "for we always recollected each other's birthdays, and interchanged letters at

those times, if at no other. I should have written to Kitty in another fortnight. I feel sure now that it was she. She was looking away from me as she passed, and her hair was all blowing about; but I caught sight of her face, and it had her old merry smile, just as though she had heard something funny."

"So she had. Mutton's and Mattins!" said Edgar, as he called to mind the brief conversation that he had overheard between the two young ladies.

"But it did not dawn upon me at the moment," said Helen, "that it could be Kitty Galloway; for I had no idea that she was here. She is such a dear merry girl! I do hope that they are making a long stay. How nice it will be!"

"Very!" said Edgar, "especially if she will introduce us to her friend who has just gone to Mattins. But here we are at the other extremity of the symbolized social condition of Brighton—Mutton's!"

They were blown into the shop through its second glass door, which Edgar closed with some difficulty, and found themselves in the very stronghold of tarts and all other good things, of the

fitness of which for her own table Mrs. Melladew had been satisfying herself by a close inspection, and was now engaged in testing the quality of the cheesecakes. Two young ladies, similarly employed, were also in the shop; but neither of these proved to be Miss Galloway.

"I daresay she is in that inner room; you had better go there and look," said Edgar, directing his sister's attention to a half-glass door at the farther end of the shop.

Helen went as directed and found herself in a small room that was lighted by a domed skylight, from which hung a glass chandelier, and partially by a long window to the right of the room that looked into the cooking precincts of Mutton's establishment. Opposite to her, as she entered through the half-glass door, was a large mirror standing over a buhl cabinet, on which were figures and ornamental flowers under tall glass shades; other figures of a similar character being upon the stand in front of the long window. Beneath the chandelier and domed skylight, in the centre of the room, was a round table laid with a white cloth, water-bottles, cruet-stand, and other evidences of luncheon; and there were smaller tables else-

where. One of these was to her left, near to a sofa; and on this sofa, with her long hair floating over her shoulders, was seated a young lady, busily engaged over a basin of soup.

The two looked at each other; and then the magic words "Kitty!" "Nelly!" were mutually uttered; and, if they did not at once rush into each other's arms, it was to be attributed to the hindering intervention of the table and soup.

CHAPTER XV.

OLD SCHOOL FRIENDS.

"WHY, who would have thought of seeing you here? What an age it is since we met? How little you are altered! I knew you at once."

There was a gush of conversation, and a mutual explanation as to where they were, and who composed their respective parties. The Galloways had come there only a few days before, and intended to stay for six or seven weeks, so that they would be in Brighton during the whole of the time of the Melladews' visit. This was a delightful discovery to both the old school friends.

"And you are still Nelly Melladew, and have not changed your name?" said the new-found friend. "You know that it is nearly a year since I have heard from you, so that there was plenty

of time for you to commit matrimony in the interval, and I was beginning to wonder whether I should have a birthday letter from you, and whether you would sign your name Nelly Melladew or Nelly Some-one-else."

"No; I am Nelly Melladew still," laughed that young lady.

"Then, are you engaged?" asked the other, whose gay briskness and animation were as innocent of restraint as were, at that moment, the long wave-damped tresses of her rich brown hair. Her pretty face was all sunshiny brightness, in perfect keeping with the frankness of her demeanour.

"No, I am not engaged," said Helen.

"Ah, but you wish to be!" laughed her companion. "Oh, don't tell me! I see from your blushes that there is some one to care for and think about. Dear old Nelly! how nice it must be," continued Miss Galloway, in so thoroughly natural and unaffected a manner that it was impossible for it to be mistaken for that enforced and laboured gushing adopted by other young ladies than the Melladews' neighbour, Miss Honora Gattertop. In Miss Galloway the gushing was

CHAPTER XVI.

INNS AND OUTS.

WEST STREET, as its name denotes, once formed the western boundary of the fishing village of Brighthelmstone; and as it is now situated as near as possible in the very centre of the town as it spreads from west to east, this circumstance alone would serve to indicate the growth of Brighthelmstone into the modern sea-side Babylon of Brighton. The town fire-cage that hung at the bottom of this street over the low western cliff, and nightly, by its flickering blaze, guided the fishermen to the beach, did not disappear until many years after the Prince Regent brought Brighton into fashion; but it was the last link between the Brighthelmstone of the past and the Brighton of the present.

But West Street has its memories, and is

peculiarly distinguished as being the chief historical street of the town; and it so happens that its best historical associations are for the most part clustered around that lower part of the street that opens on to the cliff and the modern King's Road. To the upper part of the street belong the memories of minor events and personages that come nearer to our own days, such as the house (now the Albany Tavern) where lived Townsend, the Bow Street runner, when he was in attendance upon his Prince and King, who frequently lunched with him at this house, and was fond of riding down West Street; and the house of Ings the butcher, that famous Cato Street conspirator, who had specially prepared his butcher's knife to cut off two ministers' heads and Lord Castlereagh's hands, intending to preserve them in brine, but, being prevented from his purpose, had his own head cut off instead by the public hangman, Botting, a Brighton man, who, after having carried out the last penalties of the law on the Cato Street conspirators, Fauntleroy the banker, and one hundred and sixty-nine less known criminals, was pensioned by the grateful city of London

and retired upon his laurels to his native town of Brighton, where he died in 1837.

The two houses to which the chief historical memories of West Street are attached face each other in the lower portion of the street. The one is the King's Head Inn, wherein Charles the Second slept on the night before he made his escape from England after Cromwell's "crowning mercy" at Worcester; and the other is the dwelling-house in which the Thrales received Dr. Johnson and other celebrities of the age. The latter, a long, low, two-storied house, still presents the same appearance that it did in the Thrales' days, with its pillars and railings extending from its old-fashioned portico, with its massive griffin scrapers, on which Dr. Johnson—if it was his custom to perform so cleanly an action—must have often scraped his feet. In the garden behind the house still stands the mulberry-tree under which he loved to sit; and there, too, is the pump from which, early in a morning, the servant maid would pump on to his bald head in order to remove from it the fumes of the previous night's potations. What a subject for Mr. Ward or Mr. Eyre Crowe—the wigless

doctor in his dressing-gown meekly submitting to be pumped on by a giggling servant-girl! He needed it often at that house, for the Thrales kept much company, and that of the best, West Street being quite the fashionable and court quarter of the town. The doctor wrote to Mrs. Thrale how "he had a bad toe at Brighthelmstone" from the good living there, which bad toe developed into gout, and sadly plagued him. Even when far away in Skye he did not forget this house, and wrote to its mistress, "There is neither town nor village in the island, nor have I seen any house but Macleod's, that is not much below your habitation at Brighthelmstone;" and again from Mull he writes to her of a cave whose mouth was "embarrassed with stones, which the sea had accumulated, as at Brighthelmstone;" and in Mrs. Piozzi's "Letters" there are numerous mentions of the doctor's visits to this house, and their mutual jokes at the Brighton scenery—that the inhabitants "escape the melancholy months that show a decaying year, because there are no leaves to fall;" and that there is "not one tree in sight to show the fall of the leaf"—a joke which the

modern wit has developed into the epigrammatic saying that the only tree in Brighton is its *beach*. It was at one of those Johnsonian dinners at this house that Foote, despairing of a more *recherché* dish, called to the Thrales' servant to bring back the neck of mutton, saying that "he perceived it was neck or nothing." Apparently it was a banquet that was not quite up to the customary standard of excellence observed at that rich man's table.

Fanny Burney, too, was a frequent visitor at this house, and has left her record of it in the lively pages of Madame D'Arblay's "Diary"—how the doctor accompanied them to a ball; and how, at an evening party at his host's, he confuted Mr. Pepys on Pope's definition of wit; and how he was but seldom invited to the grand parties at Lady Rothes', Lady Shelley's, and Lady de Ferrars'; and how she, together with Mrs. and the three Misses Thrale, bathed at six in the morning by moonlight, and then set out with Dr. Johnson for London; and, incidentally, she graphically sketches the state of Brighton society in the autumn of 1779, when the Steyne was the fashionable promenade, and its two booksellers' shops, Thomas's and Bowen's, the fashionable

lounges. At night they went to "the Rooms" at Hicks's, or the Ship Tavern, to the assemblies that were held alternately there and at Shergold's, or the new Assembly Rooms. On one night they had tea at the rooms with Mrs. Dickens, a lady of Mrs. Thrale's acquaintance, and saw the reigning toast, Mrs. Musters (the mother of the Mr. Musters who married Byron's Miss Chaworth), Lady de Beauclerk, Lady Pembroke, and others, together with a M. Cure, who proclaimed her to be the authoress of "Evelina." On other occasions she met, at the Rooms or at the Thrales', with various eccentric characters—the Irish commissary Dr. Delap, the excellent Mr. Tidy, with his "sneaking, pitiful wig," Mr. Selwyn, and others, who supplied her pen with many smart descriptions. But Cumberland, the dramatic author, being jealous that she should be about to bring out a play, would not notice her, for which the lively lady did not care a pin, but went to the poky little theatre to see Dryden's version of "the Tempest," at which Mr. Thrale "turned up his nose with an expression of contempt at the beginning of the performance, and never suffered it to return to its usual place till it was ended."

Another peep at the Brighton of that day is given by Mrs. Thrale herself when she writes thus to Miss Fanny Burney, under date of July 19, 1780 :— .

"I write now from Bowen's shop, where he has been settled about three days; and here comes in one man hopping, and asks for 'Russell on Sea Water;'—another tripping, and begs to have the last new novel sent him home to-night; one lady tumbles the ballads about, and fingers the harpsichord which stands here at every block-head's mercy; and another looks over the liliputian library, and purchases Polly Sugarcake for her long-legged missey. My master is gone out riding, and we are to drink tea with Lady Rothes; after which the Steyne hours begin, and we cluster round Thomas's shop, and contend for the attention of Lord John Clinton, a man who could, I think, be of consequence in no other place upon earth, though a very well-informed and modest-mannered boy."

Opposite to the Thrales' house in West Street is the King's Head Inn, where Charles the Second passed his last night in England before his escape to France; "so I fail not," wrote Miss Burney, "to look at it with loyal satisfaction, and his black-wigged Majesty has, from the time of his restoration, been its sign." Although much altered from its original condition, it still preserves sufficient of its old quaint aspect, not only to

suggest its former appearance but also to make it a picturesque subject for the sketch-book; and yet, strange to say, amid the many views of Brighton that are to be purchased in the various Brighton shops—whether in the shape of engravings or photographs—no view can be procured either of the Thrales' house or the King's Head Inn,—a notable proof, if proof were needed, that the modern Brighton does not "go in" (as the slang of the day hath it) for history or antiquities, but for the latest fashions and newest arrivals. Nevertheless there must be a large class of visitors to Brighton who would take a sufficient interest in Dr. Johnson, Fanny Burney, Mrs. Thrale, and Charles the Second, to be willing to purchase photographs or views of these two West Street houses, that recall so many associations of those variously distinguished personages. At present the Brighton visitor must content himself with an outward inspection of the houses and the diligent perusal of Madame D'Arblay's "Diary," Mrs. Piozzi's "Letters," and Mr. Harrison Ainsworth's romance of "Ovingdean Grange," in which (although with the novel-writer's privilege of mingling fact with fiction) he has so graphically portrayed the Bright-

helmstone of Charles the Second's day, and described the King's adventure at the inn in West Street, which, at that time, was called "The George." From there he made his escape at two o'clock in the morning, and rode to Shoreham, from whence he safely crossed to Fécamp, in the brig "Surprise," belonging to that Captain Nicholas Tettersell whose altar-tomb, with its interesting inscription, is to be seen on the exterior of the south side of the chancel of Brighton parish church.

As the Melladews and Miss Galloway walked slowly up the street, Edgar pointed out to his mother and sister the Thrales' house on the opposite side of the road, and then directed their attention to the King's Head Inn, which no longer, however, presented for its sign that representation of "his black-wigged Majesty" that had given Miss Fanny Burney such "loyal satisfaction."

"Thrale, as you may remember," said Edgar, "was a brewer, and here, on this side of the street, you see a brewer's sign spanning the yard-way, with the name "Vallance and Catt;" and if you look under that sign you will see a bedroom

window on the side of the inn. It lights the room in which Charles the Second slept on the night of his escape from England."

"Oh! I never knew that before," cried Miss Galloway. "How I should like to go in and see it."

"So should I," said Helen.

And as the landlord of the King's Head chanced to be near to the door, and, hearing what they said, civilly asked them to walk in and see the room, Mrs. Melladew, before she could scarcely tell what she was about, found herself in a Brighton public-house in quest of relics of a monarch for whom she entertained the least possible reverence. But Miss Galloway pronounced this little episode in the morning's shopping to be "great fun," though, after all, there was but little to see. The kitchen was much in its original state, and all the rooms had their old low ceilings; but the king's bedroom had been altered; and the bed on which he had slept, together with the chair on which he had sat, and every other article of furniture with which he could possibly have had the slightest connection, had long since been purchased as relics and

deposited in various museums. However, there was much about the house that was indubitably contemporaneous with Charles's brief sojourn in it; so the visitors pronounced it to be well worth seeing, and one of the lions of Brighton.

But Mrs. Melladew's pleasure was somewhat damped by fears lest they should be seen coming out of a public-house. "Whatever would people think!" she groaned to her daughter. "I do hope we may not be seen! and ought we to give the man a shilling, do you think?—though he looks too respectable to take it. I had no idea of being brought here; and it has sadly hindered my shopping. I wish we could go out by a back way; for I would not for the world be seen coming out of a public-house."

But they managed very well; for the obliging landlord took them out into the yard at the back in order to explain the alterations that had been made in the house, and to point out where an old well and doorway had been; and so they made their escape round by the stables and into the street a little way above the inn; though it was not without a heightened colour that Mrs. Melladew found herself face to face with a bevy of

visitors, chiefly ladies, who were on their way down West Street to the King's Road.

"They will think that we have been ordering horses at these livery stables," said Edgar, to comfort his mother.

"Church is over," said Miss Galloway; "and these people are on their way from what they call Mattins. Perhaps we may meet Ella Hardy."

Edgar devoutly hoped so. But Mrs. Melladew, chafing at the word Mattins, said to her son, as her daughter and Miss Galloway walked a little in advance, "Mattins, indeed! I thought those Puseyites pretended to go by their prayer-books. And if so, why do they call their Morning Prayer Mattins?"

"Perhaps," replied Edgar, "for the same reason that, in accordance with Sam Slick, the Frenchman called his hat a shappo—from his inability to speak English."

"I do hope," continued Mrs. Melladew to her son, "that Helen will not suffer herself to be led away by this newly-found friend. It is very unfortunate that she is so close a neighbour to us; and I am sure that the less we see of such people the better."

Edgar mentally disagreed with this proposition *in toto.*

"I must give Helen a caution," continued the anxious mother. "For although I am glad to say that she has been properly brought up on purely pious and Protestant principles,"—

"What a famous crop of P's!" thought Edgar.

"Yet, even the best brought-up girls may sometimes be led away to follow eccentricities; and there are new fashions in religion as well as in dress. I must keep a watch on her intimacy with this High Church young lady, who is so fond of going to her Mattins. Mattins, indeed!" And the worthy matron's wrath culminated very appropriately at the precise moment that brought her to the spot which was the very stronghold of Mattins, and of all that pertained thereto in Brighton.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HOME OF MATTINS.

ST. PAUL'S Church, around which so much party feeling has been gathered, and which has been either the centre of attraction or repulsion to the church-going world of Brighton, stands half-way up and at a slight distance off the western side of West Street, from which it is separated by a low wall of black cut flints coped with stone. At the upper end of this wall is the eastern entrance to the church, and at its lower end is the timbered gable of a lofty entrance porch, which is continued in the form of a cloister, parallel with the south front of the church, to which it is joined at its western extremity by a large and roomy porch which entirely covers the lower portion of the church's western front. This covered outer court or room makes a sort of ante-chapel, which is protected

from the cloistered way by an oaken door, over which hangs a thick leathern "portal," which is of use to fence out the congregation both from wind and noise.

Entering this ante-chapel, we have to our left its western wall, on whose inner space unappropriated by windows are some excellent frescoes, the work of a lady amateur. To the right is the fine triple-arched entrance to the church; and as doors are here rendered needless, the arches are left open, and the full view of the interior is thus gained, without sacrificing the congregation at the western end of the church to needless draughts or distractions from opening and shutting and slamming of doors. Seen from this point the interior is certainly effective as a whole, more especially when fully lighted with gas and candles for the night services. In the day-time it is too dark; so much so that in dull weather it would be severely trying to the eyes to read a small-print prayer-book. This chiefly arises from the absence of clerestory windows in the nave, and the large western window and those of the aisles being inadequate to convey a sufficiency of light through their richly-stained glass. Doubtless this was the

very purpose of the design, and the dimness of the nave may have been especially provided for, to lead on to and to contrast with the flood of brilliant light in the chancel; for symbolism has entered largely into everything connected with St. Paul's Church. The high-pitched timber roof of the nave is large and plain, and somewhat barn-like, and the open seats are of the plainest character. Indeed, except the windows and the font and its covering, there is nothing particularly worthy of observation in the nave, until we approach near to the chancel-screen, therefore the dimness that reigns in this part of the church does not conceal any special decorative details.

Decorated Gothic is the style, and it is Carpenter's Gothic too, but not the "carpenter's gothic" of the churchwarden era of architecture. It was built in 1848, and is a good specimen of that period. Carpenter was then in fashion in Brighton, and restored the parish church, where there is a brass to his memory. The windows are chiefly by Wailes, and are exceedingly effective both in design and execution; although in the great east window, as seen from the nave, a

deficiency of colour (especially in crimson and gold) is observable in the glass of the upper portion and the Catharine wheel, arising from the smallness of the pattern, which has not permitted the use of an equivalent body of colour to that employed in the figures of the seven lights. This lack of colour in the upper portion of the window is not, however, observable from the chancel, where the whole design can be viewed in its proper harmony. But as admittance into the sacred precincts of the chancel is strictly refused to the unsurpliced members of the congregation,—except to such of them as for a few brief moments enter therein to join in a certain solemn service,—the defect (if it be one) in the colouring of the upper portion of the east window is seen by every visitor to the church, who cannot approach nearer than the locked gates of the chancel-screen, surmounted by its ponderous cross, flanked by the reading-desk and pulpit, with their tall, quaint, queer-looking mediæval lanterns, and fronted by the faldstool for the reading of the litany.

Through the open work of the rood-screen the congregation are enabled to look from the dim-

ness of the nave to the brilliance of the chancel, with its high-pitched roof, powdered with golden stars on an azure ground, and lighted with a flood of rainbow hues from its stained-glass windows.

The north wall of the chancel is only pierced with one altar-light, its other space being mainly occupied by the extensive range of the organ front, the instrument itself occupying a large portion of the chamber on the ground-floor of the tower, which is built to the north of the chancel at its junction with the nave. The organ is a remarkably fine instrument, though, from its boxed-up position, much of its power is lost, and its sound is deadened or confused by the masses of stone-work that almost surround it. Perhaps, in "the swing of the pendulum," we shall live to see the day when organs shall once again be placed in open spaces and appropriate galleries, where they may not be condemned to drone like bees in a churn. Not that the St. Paul's organ does this; for, thanks to the talent of its organist, it is made independent of its bad position, and raised to such prominence that it is considered by not a few visitors to be the leading

attraction of the church, and the *carte de visite* of its player is justly entitled to its position in the shop windows, side by side with those of the clergy of St. Paul's, as one of the celebrities of the most celebrated church in Brighton; for, although the responses are given by its surpliced choir in cathedral fashion, and in far better style than obtains in most cathedrals, yet, if it were not for the fine performance of its surpliced organist, the curious throng who crowd to St. Paul's would regard (what many of them would consider to be) the other performances of the place as deficient in attraction. But the organist has adopted what may be termed the sensational style of playing, which is altogether in keeping with the character of the building and its services; and the skilful manner in which he brings out the powers of his fine but boxed-up instrument proves him to be a master in his art.

The novelist is happily independent, and in defiance of rules and regulations can roam about the sacred precincts of St. Paul's chancel without fear of ecclesiastical condemnation. With his Asmodeus' privilege he is therefore enabled to convey his reader into the charmed enclosure

from which the Brighton visitor is rigorously excluded, and into which not even the ordinary all-powerful shilling tip is effective to gain admission through the locked rood-screen gates. The stalls and open seats for the clergy and the choir occupy the other side of the screen and the north and south sides of the chancel for rather more than half its length. A painted text is carried round the wall and by the organ, until we come to the approach to the altar,—which, as a matter of course, in a church like this, is never called the communion-table. Hanging by long chains from the gold-starred roof are seven golden (that is to say brazen) lamps, that stretch across the chancel immediately over the approach to the altar precincts, which lamps, and their number, are doubtless intended to be symbolical.

The altar itself, towards which all the ornaments and decorations tend, and about which they culminate, is raised considerably above the level of the other portion of the church, being approached by a flight of five steps. On the lowest and widest, stand, on either side, two very tall and massive candlesticks, bearing candles of

the thickness of one's wrist. The altar itself is variously draped, according to the season or festival; and on the super-altar are two candlesticks, and two golden (or brazen) pots for flowers, and a gilt monstrance with cross. The altar area is "vested" with silk hangings; and immediately over the altar, and beneath the east window, the space which is usually occupied by the tables of the commandments, creed, and Lord's Prayer—which, in strict compliance with that canon law that orders them to be affixed to an east wall, have ingeniously been transferred from the usual place in the chancel to a darkened spot on the east wall of the south aisle of the nave—this space is filled by that arrangement of three pictures in a frame (in which the two outer ones, of half the size of the central one, are made to fold back upon it) which is known as a triptych, and which is a common feature in Roman Catholic churches.

The Brighton visitor, even when blessed with good eye-sight, is only able to perceive enough of this triptych to recognize the general effect of three gaudily-coloured pictures in gilt frames; and if he seeks for information thereof in print he

will discover that there is no Brighton "Guide," or "Handbook," or "Beauties," that will give him the smallest possible information about the church except the time of its services; and even in that respect one of these books of universal information is reduced to so economize its space as to say, in brief despair, "Daily services, several." And he would probably—if a lover of art—be incensed at the rule that excludes him from St. Paul's chancel, and the three pictures of this triptych, which were painted expressly for their present situation by Mr. J. B. Jones. But, the Asmodeus-like novelist can take a close look at them and can describe them to his friend the Brighton visitor, vainly endeavouring to make out their subjects and design, as he peers at them from the nave side of the rood-screen.

The central design represents the Adoration of the Magi, and the two outer pictures jointly depict the Annunciation to the Virgin, the Virgin occupying the right hand compartment and the Angel that to the left. In accordance with the custom of the Romish Church in its representation of this event, the Virgin is not made to kneel to the Angel, but the Angel to the Virgin. The

artist, however, has drawn his Angel as kneeling only upon one knee, but whether or no this may be intended as symbolical of a concession to Protestantism, and only a half-move towards Popery, must be left to the spectator's discrimination. The Virgin is represented as sitting, and through the hangings behind her are seen roses and straggling flowers. The wings of the angel Gabriel are not of the conventional dove-like hue, but apparently have been studied from the plumage of a pheasant, the chief colours being rich browns and reds shot with gold. The Angel is holding to the Virgin her symbolical lilies, and over each picture is a scroll with two lines of Scripture text describing the scenes beneath. The pictures are painted in the extremest style of ultra Pre-Raffaelitism and with Venetian gorgeousness of colour; and as all the female faces are precisely alike, it is to be presumed that they were studied from the same model, or are considered by the painter to be the typical countenance for Scripture scenes. These pictures are understood to have been painted at a considerable cost, but they lack much of the beauty and effectiveness of the frescoes gratuitously

executed by the lady amateur in the porch or ante-chapel.

The unfinished tower of St. Paul's, with its tall, black, wooden extinguisher raised over its melodious peal of bells, had just caught Mrs. Melladew's eye as she and her son came up with Helen and Miss Galloway, who had stopped beside the gabled entrance to the cloister.

"Ella Hardy," said Miss Galloway, "must have gone home by the other way, through Russell Place; unless she is stopping to confess," she added, with a laugh.

"Here is the board for the list of services for the week," said Helen. "The curates must have enough to do."

"Yes; and they work hard in visiting the schools and the poor," said Miss Galloway. "The Brighton doctor who has attended papa told him that, in five cases out of six, if a poor person had been visited by a clergyman, it was by one of the St. Paul's staff."

"Perhaps the doctor in question," suggested Edgar, "was a thorough-going St. Paulite."

"Well, perhaps he was," replied Miss Gallo-

way; "but, at any rate, they work hard at their duties, as Ella Hardy often reminds me; for, as you see by this board of notices, they have their Mattins and Evensong and many other services at their other Church of St. Mary Magdalene in Bread Street."

"Where also they have a nunnery, have they not?" asked Mrs. Melladew. "I believe that I have been told so."

"Not exactly a nunnery, but a home, or something of that sort," replied Miss Galloway. "You will see them come to church in their uniform dress, with grey shawls and black bonnets. They have, at this present time, a notable young lady among them—none other than Constance Kent, who was supposed to have been concerned in that dreadful Road murder."

This was too much for Mrs. Melladew's feelings, and she delivered her judgment.

"These people, with their Mattins, and their Evensong, and their Popish practices, are quite capable of anything; and I can therefore quite believe it possible that Constance Kent is one of their nuns, for I daresay that it is a real nunnery,

although they think fit to disguise it under some Puseyite name."

"Here is the old monk himself," whispered Miss Galloway.

And as she spoke a gentleman stepped out of the cloistered way beside which they were standing. He was clad in the garb (as the penny-a-liners say) of that High Church class of dress which, in the slang of the scoffers, is called the tractarian "M. B.," or "mark of the beast." He was moderately tall, exceedingly thick-set, and with very broad slouching shoulders. As he passed the Melladews and gave them a look, he had a good-humoured smile on his large, red, cleanly-shaven face; and he slouched across the road to a little shop wherein were pictures and photographs in ecclesiastical-looking frames, crosses, crucifixes, carved monograms and desks, and a miscellaneous collection of High Church publications and paraphernalia.

"He does not look very terrible, does he?" said Edgar to his mother. "I should say, judging from his looks, that he is a very jolly sort of fellow."

"Ah!" groaned Mrs. Melladew, "appearances are deceitful. He had a nasty, sly, jesuitical look about the corners of his eyes. I detected it at once. He looks, in my opinion, very like a monk or friar."

"Friar Tuck," laughed Edgar; "or one of the monks of old who belonged to such a jovial race, for he does not look much like an ascetic. He could not say, with Tate and Brady,

> 'My knees with fasting are grown weak,
> My body lank and lean!'

for his appearance would belie his words."

"Pray let us dismiss him from our minds," said Mrs. Melladew, "and come away from this black-looking church, or my morning's shopping will never be done."

So they went on their way up West Street, and turned their backs on the truncated tower of St. Paul's, which, being built of cut flints, was certainly black-looking, as Mrs. Melladew had called it. That the worthy lady's thoughts concerning this church's services and clerical staff partook of the sombre hue of the building was attributable to that overbalancing of mental judg-

ment and thoroughly-roused indignation into which she was thrown whenever her Protestant nose scented the faintest taint of Popery. And the incumbent of St. Paul's was quite certain to suffer in Mrs. Melladew's estimation, even if it was for no other reason than for the simious practice of calling the Morning Prayer of the Protestant Church by the Romanized word Mattins.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MISS GALLOWAY'S NARRATIVE.

LEAVING behind them St. Paul's and its Mattins, the two young ladies walked up West Street, closely followed by Mrs. Melladew and her son, he making mental studies of Miss Galloway's extensive and dishevelled back hair, and she scanning the contents of such shops as came within her ken. Thus they passed Maynard's shop, with its long frontage of "goodies," and turned into the Western Road, where Mrs. Melladew got over her shopping much more quickly than she had anticipated, finding so many excellent shops that her only embarrassment arose from the richness of selection that was afforded her.

By the time, however, that they had got back to Cliff Place she felt herself too tired to go down with the others to the beach, so she excused herself,

and went into Mrs. Harpeyden's to rest till luncheon. Edgar suggested that the two young ladies should also come in and rest for a few minutes, while they had a glass of sherry and a biscuit to recruit them after their morning's work; and Miss Galloway consented to this, after she had stepped across the road to No. 52, and had ascertained that Miss Hardy and her aunt were not at home, but had gone down the street in the direction of the King's Road. They had doubtless gone down to the beach, whither the two young ladies and Edgar would follow them, though with no certainty of meeting them in the dense crowd.

"You have explained my mistake," said Edgar Melladew to Miss Galloway, as they sat for a few minutes in Mrs. Harpeyden's drawing-room, "in taking Miss Hardy for Miss Buggins; and I wonder that I should also have taken the aunt for the mother, for I might have surmised that so plain an old lady would not be so nearly related to—to——"

"To such a pretty girl as Ella Hardy," interposed Miss Galloway. "And she is very pretty, is she not?"

"Perhaps she is, to those who admire that style," said Edgar, with assumed indifference.

"Oh, Mr. Melladew! I am sure that you admire it," said Miss Galloway. "Ella Hardy is considered by every one to be quite a belle; and it was only yesterday that a friend of papa's was calling her the Beauty of Brighton. My brother Frank is wild about her, although he only saw her once, and that was on horseback, with her cousin, Captain Hardy. The captain has now left Brighton, and I wrote to Frank to tell him that when he came back to us to-morrow he would find the coast clear; unless you intend to be his rival, Mr. Melladew. Though I daresay, for the matter of that, that there will be a host of rivals, for Ella is always admired by the gentlemen, and I have often seen them turn to look at her. And her aunt, Miss O'Fay, was once a beauty herself, although you seem to think otherwise."

"I am certainly inclined to be incredulous," laughed Edgar. "Perhaps the niece's beauty will be as short-lived as that of the aunt."

"Tell me all about Ella," said Helen Melladew.

"Well, Nelly," said Miss Galloway, "you will remember that when we left Mrs. Marchmont's Ella's parents were wealthy, or of course they could not have afforded to send her to a school where we paid a hundred a year for being taught how to get in and out of a carriage gracefully, and to play fantasias and nocturnes and *Lieder ohn Worte,* and all that sort of thing, which I hope you've kept up, Nelly, much better than I am sorry to say I have done—the practising I mean, and not the getting in and out of the carriage—for I never could manage the treble with the left hand, and I believe never shall, even if I lived to be as old as Methuselah. Yes, I'm coming to the point, Mr. Melladew, for I see that you are all impatience to hear about Ella Hardy, although you pretend to think her so ugly."

"No, excuse me, it was her aunt that I thought ugly. Miss Hardy is a perfect beauty, for those who admire that style—your brother, for example."

"And present company not excepted," laughed Miss Galloway. "Well, Nelly, it seems that Ella stayed on at Mrs. Marchmont's two years after we had left there, and had been considered

as finished and as capable of getting in and out of a carriage gracefully without further instruction; and her father went to see about his mines in South America, which formed the chief portion of his property, you understand, and they had all got to sixes and sevens through some reversions or falls, or change of consols—not consuls, you understand, but sols—things that I never comprehended, and don't suppose that I ever shall; but they had something to do with Mr. Hardy's mines, though in what way Goodness only knows. But what with the consols, and the water getting into the mines, and a rascally manager who had absconded with all the ready money, and one thing and another, poor Mr. Hardy lost all his fortune, and the mines came to grief; and what with this, and the anxiety and the climate, he took a bad fever and went delirious, and died even before he had time to write to England. But the people out there of course at once wrote to Mrs. Hardy and told her of her husband's death, and of the bad state of his affairs; and she was in very delicate health at the time, and the shock of the dreadful news coming so suddenly had so great an effect upon her that it may really

be said to have killed her, although she lingered through two years, during which time poor Ella nursed her, and was like a mother to her, as the saying is, only of course it was just the reverse. I mean in the relationship, not in the attention; for she was most devoted to her, and was a model daughter in every respect."

"Poor Ella!" said Helen: "and she the only child! What trials she must have passed through since our happy days at Mrs. Marchmont's!"

"Yes, it was a sad case of altered fortunes," continued Miss Galloway, "though both she and her mother bore their reverses and misfortunes very nobly. And it was a reverse, indeed; for after everything had been scraped together and all the debts had been paid, there only remained enough to Ella, after her mother's death, to bring her in twenty-three pounds a year; and I can't imagine how she manages, for she more than makes it do; for besides clothing herself out of it, she subscribes to the infirmary and the S.P.G., and does all sorts of good. And I only wish that she would tell me her secret," continued the young lady, with perfect ingenuousness; "for although papa allows me more than that for my

clothes, yet I can never make it do; and Goodness knows, I often go about a perfect fright because I have spent my allowance before the time, and don't like to ask papa for more. So there, I have brought my long tale to a conclusion; and although I am sure that I have told it in as few words as possible, yet I daresay, Mr. Melladew, you are quite tired of listening to it, and are dying to get down to the beach to be introduced to this beautiful Ella Hardy. And I won't take any more sherry, thank you, or perhaps I shall talk still faster than I do; but I should like to go to your room, Nelly, and put up my hair in something like decent order, for it seems to be tolerably dry now, and I don't want to make myself more conspicuous than I can help."

"But tell me first," said Helen, "how Ella came to live with her aunt."

"Oh! I thought I had explained all about that long ago," said Miss Galloway. "Why, of course, if it had not been for her aunt, or some one else among her relatives, she must have gone into the workhouse, or out as a governess, or done something else equally terrible; for she couldn't get a house, and dinners, and all that sort of thing, out

of twenty-three pounds a year, and find herself in dress and subscribe to the S.P.G. at the same time, could she? So when her aunt offered her what you may call an asylum—not that Miss O'Fay is mad, quite the reverse, for she is a particularly sharp old lady—but when she asked Ella to come and live with her, and read to her, and be a companion and all that sort of thing,—Ella jumped at the offer and went to live with her, and has been with her ever since."

"And how did Summer and Winter agree with each other?" asked Edgar, who had taken an excessive interest in Miss Galloway's narrative.

"Why, I think that poor Ella was rather moped at first," she replied, "for she is naturally very light-hearted and lively, and Miss O'Fay is rather the reverse."

"Decidedly so, I should say, judging from her countenance," interposed Edgar.

"But Ella had been obliged to go through so much sorrow and comparative privation," continued Miss Galloway, "that she was not inclined for gaiety, and this made her the more disposed to settle down to her new life. And she seems very happy, although her aunt is dreadfully Low-

Church, and of course does not at all approve of Mattins or anything of the sort."

Mrs. Melladew, who had just entered the room, and had heard this sentence, was delighted to hear that Miss Hardy, whose views appeared to be so exceedingly objectionable, was with such a wise and discreet relative, whose counsel and society, Mrs. Melladew sincerely hoped, might avert from her niece those evils which would undoubtedly accumulate around her if she abandoned herself to Mattins and other dreadful Puseyite and Popish practices. But this homily of the worthy matron's was more especially intended for her son's benefit—her daughter and Miss Galloway having left the room—and she pursued the theme, for his advantage, until the two young ladies had returned. Then he was released from the well-intentioned homily; and Miss Galloway's dishevelled tresses having been gathered up into their accustomed out-door fashion, the three went down the street to the King's Road.

It was now a little past the half-hour that divides twelve from one o'clock, and all the noontide attractions of Brighton beach were in full force. The bustle and cheerfulness, the lively

music, the dense throng, the pleasant Babel of sounds, the amazing diversity of gay costumes, the gleaming expanse of sea, the dash of its waves on the shingle, the boats and shipping, the carriages and equestrians, all combined to crowd a scene which had all the charms of novelty for Helen Melladew, and of which as yet she was unable to notice the details, but could only accept them in her comprehensive glance as portions of a crowded picture that dazzled her eye with its gaiety and brilliance. Her moonlight acquaintance with the scene on the previous evening had only partially prepared her for the flashing panorama that was now spread before her, irradiated by the full glory of the summer sun—a panorama unequalled in Great Britain. Nowhere else could she have seen so fair a sea-frontage, stretching for three miles along the cliff its unbroken lines of palace-like houses, gay shops, and grand hotels, and, in the words of Macaulay, presenting "mile after mile, its gay, fantastic front to the sea." And, on this particular morning, that three-mile range of white houses glittered in the sun, pillared and balconied and bow-windowed, and of endless diversity in height and size, look-

ing as though Carlton Terrace, Regent Street, Park Lane, Piccadilly, and Bond Street had taken a trip to the sea-side, and had settled themselves on the Brighton cliffs, placing between them and the beach the canter-ground of Rotten Row and the long sweep of the drive from Kensington to the Serpentine, and increasing their attractions by the peculiar life and variety that can flourish only by the margin of the sea.

Along this three-mile frontage, which is a straight line, with just an attempt to make it assume the form of the line of beauty and grace by curving it round by Brill's Baths and the Albion up the steep ascent of the Esplanade, is carried a spacious carriage-road, as wide as Regent Street, and, indeed, somewhat wider at its eastern extremity, which, flanked by broad footways, extends from Kemp Town to Clifton-ville. The construction of this marine drive and promenade, which is the leading feature and attraction in this sea-side city, was a triumph of art over unusual difficulties. In the King's Road it had to be carried along the low bank that was dignified by the name of the Western Cliff, and formed with vast quantities of soil taken there for

that purpose, sweeping away Bellevue Field and the wharf at the lower end of what is now Regency Square, driving off the capstans and fishing smacks and shipways and smugglers' boats, and burying the ruins of the old Block House, that had once formed a portion of the fortifications of Brighthelmstone, until in 1748 it was destroyed by an incursion of that enemy that has so often dealt destruction to the southern cliff-wall of Brighton—the sea. Indeed, owing to the continual inroads of the sea, the King's Road and its gaily-frequented beach cover the area that once formed part of the town of Brighthelmstone. Forty acres of the West Cliff were submerged between 1260 and 1340; in 1665 twenty houses under the West Cliff were swept away; and in the great storms of 1703 and 1705 no less than a hundred and thirteen houses, that stood under the West Cliff, were totally destroyed. The cliff itself had been so gradually and perseveringly nibbled at by the hungry ocean that at length it was found absolutely necessary to protect the town by the formation of a sea-wall and the defence of groynes, a local name given to stout wooden barriers running out from the land

to low-water mark, against which the sea rolls up its banks of shingle, and thus itself forms the succession of walls against which it vainly dashes. The inroads of the sea upon the eastern cliff had been so extensive that the wide drive along the Marine Parade in front of the palaces at Kemp Town had fairly to be snatched from the ocean, which had won its victories at no very distant date by the entire destruction of South Street, and which fought at the lofty eastern cliffs until they reeled and fell. To accomplish this it was necessary not only to protect the beach by the outworks of the jettied groynes, but also to build a great sea-wall rising to the height of sixty feet, and carried along the east cliff for the distance of a mile. This was done at an expense of one hundred thousand pounds, the wall being sloped upwards from a base of fifteen feet in thickness, and firmly filled in with chalk. And thus for three miles the wide marine drive and promenade of Brighton is carried along the cliff over the buried traces of the ravages of a sea whose destructive powers are now confined to certain limits.

CHAPTER XIX.

BRIGHTON BEACH.

ALONG the broad road of the marine drive and promenade rolls the restless, busy stream of fashion, and on the still broader beach that is stretched beside it is to be seen that motley throng which, in the height of the autumn season, makes Brighton beach, from twelve to one in the day, a crowded Vanity Fair of bustling gaiety. From the town side of the King's Road, with its wide pavement traversed by fashionably-dressed visitors,—across the road itself, along which carriages of every kind are dashing, and whole squadrons of the fair cavalry of Brighton are charging,—to the line of iron railing, against which is drawn up a long row of flies, bath-chairs, and goat-carriages,—across the broad promenade, whose gravelled walk is now so thronged that continuous onward movement on

the pedestrian's part is well nigh impossible, and he is compelled to comport himself as a mere lounger and saunterer,—where the double ranges of visitors' seats are densely occupied, and where the bath-chairs of the invalid and aged are brought to a dead lock in the crowd,—from the palatial-looking piles of houses across to this wide promenade there is, from twelve to one o'clock on a fine day early in the autumn season, a moving mass of fashionable humanity, that would suffice to crowd three or four ordinary sea-side towns, but who have room and to spare in the stately precincts of the queen of British watering places.

Not that the crowd are confined to this one spot, nor limited to the boundary of that wide gravelled promenade; for it is but a terrace raised above the beach, to which it descends by a steep bank and many flights of stone steps; and the broad beach falls in a succession of four wide shingly terraces before the motley throng scattered over its surface can touch the sea-margin, and either dip themselves in the waves or watch the bathers. It is on that portion of the beach westward of the new pier, between Regency Square and Brunswick Terrace, that the greatest

morning throng is to be seen, and where the sea-side attractions are congregated. There also is to be found the largest station of the bathing-machines, more than three hundred of which are distributed at various points along the shore, from Hove to Kemp Town. And therefore it is, that at this particular spot—which more than any other locality may be termed Brighton beach—are to be seen in the greatest number the floundering forms of those modern mermaidens who were wont to make such pretty studies for the unsurpassed pencil of Leech, but whose be-draggled forms, bobbing up and down in the shallow water, look so far from enchanting to the eye of dull reality. A greater contrast, perhaps, could scarcely be found than in the truthful representation of one of these maidens as she staggers back to her machine, beaten and buffeted by rude waves, her blue ragged bathing-gown adhering to her dripping figure, her luxuriant hair (unless gathered into an oilskin skull-cap) hanging like rats' tails or a Skye terrier's wet coat, a rope round her waist or in her hands, and bathing-slippers or goloshes on her feet to protect them from the cruel shingle—and a picture

of the same young lady when she emerges from the other end of her machine, radiant and blooming, petticoated and crinolined, with the prettiest morning costume and the most coquettish hat and feather, with elaborate gloves and boots, and gay parasol, and with her glistening hair streaming over her shoulders, or loosely knotted up with a crimson or blue ribbon.

These two appearances are so diverse that they scarcely seem to belong to one and the same person. They are, if possible, more discordant and incongruous than the two pictures presented not a hundred yards from that young lady's machine, the one depicting her lover, Mr. Deewitt, of the Post-obit Office, with his sturdy—not to say corpulent—figure gleaming like wax-work from the ebbing wave, whose receding sweep leaves him exposed to view in a small pair of light blue drawers, looking like a strayed acrobat practising new contortions,—and the other picture delineating the same gentleman stepping forth from the northern end of his machine, glass in eye and stick in hand, with turn-down collar and the latest novelty in trousers.

These bathers, although unattractive in them-

selves, yet prove a great source of attraction to the non-bathers, who, lounging, lying, or sitting on the green chairs that stud the beach, and form a part of the movable property of the boatmen, can lazily enjoy the satisfaction of seeing their male and female fellow-creatures tubbing in the open air, equally free from quiet as from privacy. The smooth sand is visible only at very low water; and the morning bathing takes place on a bed of loose shingle, in which the Naïads and Tritons have some difficulty to walk; and as but few of them can swim, their progressive movements in the water are marked by vigour rather than grace.

Prominent among the motley throng upon the beach are the natives, the men and women who attend upon the bathing-machines; the former with their blue shirts and semi-sailor garb, and the latter with their blue flannel dresses, scarlet handkerchiefs, and bonnets on which are worn "uglies;" which, however, are perfectly superfluous for the preservation of the wearer's complexion, and would appear to be assumed to tantalize the fair bathers with memories of those convenient hoods, like enlarged uglies,

which, in nearly every other watering place than Brighton, are affixed to the sea-front of the bathing-machines. These modern representatives of the famous Martha Gunn, whose pictorial fame as a bather of youthful royalty rests on no foundation whatever, as the Prince Regent did not visit Brighton until he was twenty years of age, when his bathing-machine attendant was William Miles, the "Old Smoker" of the song,—these blue-frocked females are the only persons of their sex to be seen on the beach who are (as yet, in fashion's era) destitute of crinoline. And yet to them crinoline might prove of service; for, as they who have tried it can testify, it can keep a person afloat in the water, serving much the same purpose as corks would do around the ankles, although it would prove somewhat of a hindrance in rapid swimming. But for mere floating purposes it might be advantageously adopted by the bathing-machine women, who need then not be afraid of venturing out into the water to assist their fair patrons who are unable to swim. At present the women only step into the edge of the sea in order to dip those unfortunate children who usually show themselves to be as averse to the

proceeding as was recorded of the celebrated Mrs. Fry.

All those people, both men and women, who attend upon the bathing-machines, greatly assist to diversify the costumes and scene on Brighton beach. And there are plenty of sailors too, especially on calm sunny days, like to that on which Helen Melladew made her first acquaintance with the spot, sailors who tout for custom, and who, even in the roughest weather, are ready to aver that it is "a beautiful day for a sail," but who, when the sea looks like a duck-pond, are justified in asserting that it is "a nice day for a row"—sailors who, whatever may be your occupation, holloa to you to step down and help to make up a party of forty or fifty who are about to proceed on an hour's sail five or six miles out from land in the clipper schooner-yacht "Skylark," or in "the original Lady Sale," or her opponent "the Lady Sale," which is certainly a more appropriate name than "Skylark" for a sailing vessel.

The great bulk of fishing-boats are hauled up on that portion of the beach near to the "Old Ship Inn" and Brill's Baths, which is specially reserved for them, and where the various processes

that attend upon the repairs of craft and rigging may be observed by the interested visitor, who also can there witness the sale of fish by Dutch auction, and can obtain considerable amusement from the novel and animated scene. But many other vessels, boats and pleasure yachts, are to be found on the beach as you walk westward, hauled up high and dry, and wound up from the sea by means of the heavy windlasses that stand beneath the bank of the promenade on the highest terrace of the beach. Worked by horses and men, these windlasses, by means of chains and ropes that are pitfalls to many strollers, wind up alike the clipper schooner-yachts and the bathing-machines, although the progress of the former on their way to and from the waves has to be assisted by planks and rollers to prevent them foundering in the heavy shingle. The lounger on Brighton beach is considerably edified by the process of getting down to the sea one of these larger craft with its sails of tawny brown, and by its crew of fishermen ready dressed for their night's work after the herrings and cod, in a serviceable but not ornamental attire of baggy tarpaulin; and by the time that the keel of the vessel no longer

slides over stones or sand, but floats upon the wave, half-an-hour has been whiled away in a sight which is an undoubted novelty to nine-tenths of those who gather to witness it.

But all these pleasure-boats and fishing-boats and craft large and small, thickly scattered over the two lowest shingled terraces of the western portion of Brighton beach, are most valuable additions, not only to the varied picturesqueness of the scene in a pictorial point of view, but also as affording so many scraps of shade and rests for the backs of the sitters. Accordingly both they and the hauled-up bathing-machines are enfiladed by women and children and nurses, who are to be seen lounging and lying around them in easy and negligent attitudes that are both studied and natural. To sit against a boat and read a novel or do fancy work is an accredited method among young ladies to pass the noontide hours on Brighton beach; and it is perhaps the nearest approach that can be made in modern society to the lotos-eater. Not that these young ladies who have "sat them down upon the yellow sand," or rather the rough shingle, and who "watch the crisping ripples on the beach, and tender curving

lines of creamy spray," are, like the lotos-eaters, "careless of mankind;" for the chief delight of their morning's lounge is neither to breathe the sweet sea-air nor tranquilly to enjoy the bustling panorama unrolled to their view—neither is it to turn over the pages of a novel, nor to employ their fingers with fancy work; but if we may credit both what we hear and see and can readily believe, it is to hold a sea-beach *levée* of gentlemen loungers, and with them to enact scenes from the novel of real life, and to execute daring though flimsy pieces of fancy work. When Miss Julia Mandeville, in her most attractive and dashing costume, has gracefully posed herself against the shady side of a boat or bathing-machine, she may not be altogether so immersed as she appears to be in that last new novel from Booty's or Folthorpe's, as altogether to overlook the movements of Captain Crespeenie, who is slowly meandering through the tulip banks of blooming dresses, evidently in quest of some lady friend to whom he can communicate the gossip and tittle-tattle with which he is fully primed. An apparently casual glance or movement made at the right juncture brings the gallant Captain to

her side, and lays him in a lounging attitude at her feet. And in this way the fancy work that is creditably got through by young ladies on Brighton beach must not be reckoned merely by perfected pieces of embroidery; for making holes and mending them is not limited to crochet work, but can also be practised on human hearts and feelings.

Then there are the nursemaids, with their young charges, who for the most part are left to take care of themselves, and who find endless amusement in rummaging the pleasure boats, tempting the waves with cunning Canute's feigned indiscretion, sailing toy boats thereon as far as a string will take them, sending water spaniels therein to fetch out sticks, lugging sea-weed by its tangled tresses, hunting for shells and Brighton diamonds that are never to be found, and, above all, digging holes and erecting mimic fortresses and earthworks. Then there are the mammas and papas, and even grandmothers and grandfathers, who also think that the crowds of children at play form the prettiest sight of all. Then there are the elder sisters and brothers, and the other loungers, who seek for other amuse-

ments than reading and flirting, and who can find them in that heterogeneous mass of humanity that crowds the central western portion of Brighton beach at any hour in the morning, but more especially from twelve to one o'clock. It was at this time in the day that Helen Melladew first saw the scene in its full perfection.

By the time that they had made their way through carriages and cavalry to the promenade on the other side of the King's Road, the bustle and gaiety of the scene was at its full height, and the ringing music of the town band filled the air with cheerful sounds. They were playing from their accustomed station on the highest terrace of the beach, beneath the bank of the promenade, a little way westward of the Bedford. Further on, opposite Regency Square, was the French string band; and between the two, or in their immediate neighbourhood, were various other performers. Bands of niggers, as a matter of course; one troupe led by a Punchinello, another by a real woman, another by an imitation woman, each band more noisy and senseless and with less melody than its predecessor, but each yelling their wish to be in Dixie. There, too, was the

man who danced "the cure" and sang comic songs, attended by a man with a drum and Pandæan pipes, succeeded by his wife dressed as a Highland chieftain, who danced reels. There, too, announced by another drum and pipes, was the acrobat with his two sons, going through a more perspiring performance even than those executed by the cure and chieftain. There, too, was the blind father playing on an unknown and unmusical musical instrument, the while his daughter sang "Sweet spirit, hear my prayer," in a way by no means suggestive of *Lurline* and Miss Louisa Pyne. There, too, was the good-humoured foreigner in the plumed hat, with his stand of performing canaries, that flew, danced, or dropped dead at the word of command, or personated the Princess Alexandra in her carriage, with her head out of the window to look after the Prince, and with General Garibaldi on the box-seat. There, too, was the performing pony called "the horse of sensibility," whose feats in spelling and fortune-telling would put to shame many of the little boys who looked on and wondered whether the result was attributable to native intelligence, or judiciously-administered punish-

ment, or beans. There, too, was the performing monkey, more intelligent even than pony or birds; and there, too, was another astute quadruped, dog Toby, and Punch, the inimitable, the ever new, the always welcome.

And there, too, was the man who extracted melody from the musical glasses, and the other man who did the like with bells. And there, too, was the harpist, with his attendant fiddler and cornet-à-piston. And there was the man selling sovereigns for a penny in order to fulfil the terms of a wager made by a noble sportsman, to whose imaginary form he continually appealed, and who was supposed to be watching him from the crowded promenade. And there, too, was the crowd of vendors who were distributed all over the beach, offering their various articles for sale—the sellers of fruit, cakes, and gingerbread; the man with the bundle of balloon-like balls of various colours; the man with the fez, who sings the lay of "Brandy balls! who'll buy my brandy balls?" the sellers of bouquets, bunches of violets, and moss-pots of ferns; the sellers of shell-boxes and pincushions made from cows' hoofs; the sellers of lace, knitted caps, and embroidery; the sellers

of hat-guards and watch-chains; the sellers of little dogs smartened up with collars of ribbon; the sellers of newspapers and penny periodicals; and the Italian boys with their white mice and guinea-pigs, who, if they do not sell the sight of their wares, trust to be paid for the same.

There, too, were the donkey boys with their donkeys caparisoned more or less gaily, with saddle-cloths more or less dingy, astride of which steeds, or perched on the top of them on side-saddles or in panniers, the young masters and misses and babies were dosed with a healthy jolting as the donkeys cantered along beneath the bank of the promenade, and thrust themselves through all impediments of ladies and gentlemen. Kept to the same track, too, were the goat-carriages, the little landaus, phaetons and waggonettes, drawn by one or two goats and filled with little ladies and gentlemen dressed in the height of juvenile fashion. In the same track, too, were the perambulators, though these were generally left high and dry upon the highest shingle, while the nurse descended with her charges towards the sea. Then there were the

rude black and green huts of the boat proprietors and fishermen, with their medley of oars and poles and rusty nets, and their sign-board notices as to "Sea-water supplied;" habitations from whence issued the blue-shirted and red-capped men who at unearthly hours of the morning disturbed your slumbers by stumping upstairs to the bedroom over your own, whose tenant could not go through his matutinal tub without the aid of sea-water. These were the men, too, who offered you the real Newfoundland pup that was warranted to have had the distemper, and who, when you got him home, proved to be a thorough-bred mongrel who had yet to be laid up with the distemper and every other known variety of canine disease. These were the men, too, who told you those remarkable anecdotes of the smuggling days of Brighton, and could put you up to a good thing in "tobaccer and silk-hankerchers," if you only kept mum and wouldn't split. These were the men, too, who had "gone through more in the way of shipwreck, bless you, than had fallen to the lot of most sailors in the wide ocean," which could only be accounted for by the dangerous nature of the Brighton coast, which, "what with the rocks and

shoals, and quicksands, your honour, let alone the Link Rock and the Loo Gate, and the Ship Rock and the Rock Tow, and the Bee Wreck and the Jenny Ground, and the Sand and Gravel and the Saltdean Rock, and all them other outlying rocks, is a coast as you must know your whereabouts to an inch; and, hoping no offence, would like to drink your honour's health." These, too, are the men who are the proprietors of those green garden-looking seats of which so many hundreds are scattered over the beach for the use of penny sitters, and of which several rows are arranged in a semicircle facing the promenade, so as to include in its centre the space occupied by the town band, when they play there every day during the season from a quarter to twelve to a quarter past one. The members of this very capital band are dressed in a military-looking uniform, with a Kepi cap, the dark cloth dress being relieved by the gold and crimson stripes; and they were in full play when Helen Melladew, with her brother and Miss Galloway, made their way through the dense crowd on the promenade, and descended to the level of the band by one of the flights of stone steps.

"Oh, it is the Lucretia Borgia music!" cried Helen, who was in ecstasies with the gay novelty of the scene. "Do let us stop a little to listen, before we go any farther."

With some difficulty, for the seats were very crowded, Edgar found two vacant places for his sister and Miss Galloway, where they could sit in comfort and listen to the music. The piece had just approached its conclusion, and Edgar had dropped his piece of silver into the money-box of the good-humoured and polite German collector for the band, and had received from him one of those small pieces of paper on which was printed the programme of the music for the day,—a programme from which he found that there were two other pieces yet to be performed before the verse of the National Anthem should disperse the assembly and dismiss them to their luncheons—when Miss Galloway suddenly exclaimed, "Why, here are Ella Hardy and her aunt, two seats before us! Do let us go and join them; the people next to them are moving off; and I know, Mr. Molladew, that you are dying to be introduced. Ella is not only a nice girl, but she is the beauty of Brighton."

"I should like to judge of that myself," laughed Edgar.

"Then come along," said Miss Galloway.

So he went along; and was soon prepared to add his own individual testimony to the praises bestowed upon the charms of their fair *vis-à-vis* of Cliff Place.

Miss Galloway effected the introductions, and they were quite needful; for although Helen Melladew and Ella Hardy had been schoolfellows, yet the years that had intervened since their last meeting had effected so great a change in the appearance of the two girls, that Helen Melladew was quite within the mark in saying that she and Ella Hardy might have passed each other without any token of recognition, and as though they had been utter strangers during their whole lives.

The pretty child whom Helen had left at Mrs. Marchmont's school had grown up to be a stately and graceful girl, whose features and complexion, as Edgar Melladew soon found, would stand the test of the closest scrutiny and pass through the ordeal in triumph. She was even more beautiful than he had imagined her to be. Her delicately white skin seemed as though the "milk of human

kindness" had creamed over to lend its tints to her charms. There was a transparency in her complexion, like the rosy tints of sunset falling upon a bed of snow, that imparted a delicate refinement to her face and toned-down features that might otherwise have been deemed too severely statuesque for the softness that gives the crowning grace to girlish beauty. Added to this, her cheeks could boast of that true peach-like bloom which is often spoken of but rarely seen, and which, as artists know, derives its peculiar charm not only from its delicate carnations that so imperceptibly mingle with the creamy white, but also for its faint and tender purples, and even for that slight suspicion of palest green in the shadows which forms the correlative of the rosy carnations and completes the resemblance to the peach's bloom. Her tall and supple figure, straight as a javeline, was full of gracefulness and dignity, as she rose to receive her old schoolfellow and friend; and her voice and manner completed the charm inspired by her beauty. It was beauty, Edgar thought, of the magnificent order,—queenly and grand. "*Patuit dea!*" he whispered to himself; "yet more of a Diana,

than a Juno,—the free and blithe goddess of open air and exercise, and not the statuesque and stately deity, coldly repellant in her charms. How magnificently beautiful she is!"

The three young ladies had so much to talk about, and so many questions and answers to put to each other, as they compared notes concerning their school-days and the time that had elapsed since last they met, that Edgar Melladew would have had but little opportunity of putting in a word, more especially as the band had commenced the inspiriting strains of the "Guards' Waltz," and he could not speak to Miss Hardy without sending his words to her past her aunt, and pitching his voice to a note that could be heard by her above the music of the band. Moreover, Miss Hardy's back was nearly turned upon him as she lent the other way to her two old school-friends. Edgar therefore did what, under the circumstances, was the most politic as well as polite thing that he could do,—he devoted his conversation to Miss Hardy's aunt, as they sat side by side on the green seat and listened to the band. As this occupied some little time, for Langenhan's Galop—"Berg auf Berg ab"—had

yet to be played before the verse of the National Anthem gave the signal for the breaking up of the party, he had abundant opportunity to form the acquaintance of Miss O'Fay; and the novelist may be permitted the same opportunity to further introduce that lady and her niece to his readers, and to briefly set before them the chief events in their previous histories.

CHAPTER XX.

FAIRY O'FAY.

MISS O'FAY was so very small a lady that when she walked with her tall niece, Ella Hardy, she looked very much like a semicolon taking an airing with a note of interrogation; but she was so exceedingly well-proportioned that in looking at her the rapt spectator lost any notion of dwarfishness or stunted growth. She was a little apple-faced old lady at the time when Edgar Melladew made her acquaintance; and to any one who was sufficiently interested in her to scrutinize her features they would be found to show traces that Miss O'Fay had been a beauty in her youthful days.

But those youthful days belonged to an era that was now far removed, so far, indeed, that when one looks to the alterations in customs, manners, and dress, it is hard to believe that the strange

era, from which we seem to be removed by whole centuries of progress, was so recent as the days of Georgius Wiggius, Prince Regent, who afterwards became Gorgeous the Fourth. It was in those distant Regency days that Miss O'Fay flourished, and it was in the Regent's own town of Brighton that her young star had shone in its brightest splendour. Backed by some introduction from the Vice-regal Court, she and her sister left their paternal home in Dublin, and had accompanied their parents to the English metropolis. From thence they migrated to Brighton, which had just then risen to great favour, popularity, and fashion. Within the second twelvemonth the career of the two beautiful sisters O'Fay was so successful that the elder had married Captain Hardy, who held a situation in the royal household, and who was highly esteemed by his royal master for his able performance on the violoncello—a talent which had indeed been his original medium of introduction to the Prince, and which obtained for him his *sobriquet* of "Big-fiddle Hardy."

The useful part that Big-fiddle Hardy played in the chamber concerts at the Regent's Marine

Pavilion at Brighton, and the assistance that he afforded to his Royal Highness in certain delicate transactions, would doubtless have advanced him to a high post of distinction had his health enabled him to compete with the Prince and his companions in their exhausting round of revels. But the pace in that mad race after pleasure was far too fast for Captain Hardy. His constitution gave way. The seeds of disease so thickly sown rapidly produced a luxuriantly destructive crop; his strength no longer permitted him to sit through a "wet" evening in that small broiling dining-room at the Pavilion, where the better-seasoned Sheridan and Hanger could endure the roasting, and make jokes about the heat of the royal oven. His palsied hands lost their delicacy of touch in producing melody from his violoncello; and, in fine, as Big-fiddle Hardy was no longer of service to his Sybarite master, he resigned his situation in his Royal Highness's household.

Captain Hardy then sought a quieter home in the favourable climate of Torquay, where he prolonged his prematurely-shattered life for another year, and then died. But it was before he left

Brighton that his only child, a son, was born; and it was this child who grew up to be the Mr. Hardy who was the father of Helen Melladew's former school-fellow. Even before her sister's marriage with Big-fiddle Hardy, the younger Miss O'Fay had made her name in the best and gayest society that Brighton then so liberally offered to its patrons, and was promoted by the young bloods and dandies to the proud position of a reigning toast. Light, graceful, pretty, and *petite*, she well merited the name which they had conferred upon her of "Fairy" O'Fay; and when she appeared at a Pavilion ball, dressed — or rather undressed—in the semi-nude costume of the period, and with all the rich and ripe charms of nineteen summers blooming upon her form, royalty itself bent a knee to her fascinations, and paid her such marked attentions that Lady C—— was furious, and even Mrs. Fitzherbert lost her usual good temper.

Her costume on that momentous occasion consisted of a light blue sarcenet worn over a white satin slip, the body tight to the shape, very short in the waist, and cut extremely low round the bust; the bosom trimmed with a full quilling

of blonde; the back cut very low, and trimmed with a frill of blonde lace; short sleeves made very full, the fulness confined at the bottom by a satin piping and finished by a quilling of blonde lace; the waist encircled by a white satin sash, tied behind in short bows with long ribands; the skirt trimmed with rouleaux of white satin; the hair not covered with a toque, but simply dressed without any ornament except a pearl comb, which fastened up the back hair in a small tuft, leaving the front hair dressed over the forehead in light curls; necklace and earrings of topaz; white kid gloves up to the elbow, and white satin slippers. Arrayed in this costume, which was considered so charmingly simple and appropriate for a young girl in the bloom of youth and beauty, the Fairy O'Fay whirled around the Pavilion ball-room in his Royal Highness's arms, to the music of *Lieber Augustin*, his partner in the new and seductive waltz which was then turning every one's heads while it inspirited their heels.

During that season the younger Miss O'Fay was a reigning toast and the Beauty of Brighton. As a matter of course, a great deal of scandal was raised concerning his Royal Highness's attention

to Fairy O'Fay. His curricle had been seen at her father's door, and it was even reported that he had sent her a very touching letter, accompanied by one of those invariable presents of diamonds for which the nation was made to pay. Scandal even whispered much more than this; for it was very evident that the Prince's fancy had been taken by the charming Irish girl, and when the royal handkerchief was thrown, the gossips always accredited the lady with picking it up.

But Fairy O'Fay passed through the trying ordeal scathless, and even her most ill-natured critics were compelled to confess that there was no more ground for their strictures than for their surmises. A pure love had taken possession of her breast, and gave its powerful aid to shield her from harm. She had given her heart to the handsome equerry, Big-fiddle Hardy. It was true that the captain had not paid her more attention than he had bestowed upon her elder sister, but, carried away by her idolatrous passion, she was blind to what every one else could see, and she only awoke from her delicious dream when it was confided to her by her sister that Captain Hardy

had proposed for that sister's hand, and that she had promised to be his wife.

Although the blow was terrible, and fell upon her so suddenly and unexpectedly, it neither crushed her life nor her love. She uttered no word of murmuring, even to her own heart, and carefully concealed the truth from her sister, who indeed was too happy in her own affection to observe any trace of that which she had never suspected. Jealously guarding her own secret, she hid her true love within her breast, and laid it by as a sacred relic and happy memory. Then she meekly accepted her position, and for two more years—such long and wearisome years as they were, crowded with daily trials and acutest pains—she lived her gay Brighton life, helping her sister in her new position as the equerry's wife, and playing her part in balls, and routs, and drums.

But whatever semblance of animation or pleasure she may have assumed—so that many thought that the Fairy was blither than ever—yet all heart and interest had died out. She went through her work mechanically, strung up to assume a certain character and to sustain it at

stated times, like many another performer on the great stage of life, but utterly wearied with her task, and with a yearning longing for the dove-like wings that should bear her out of the noisy throng to some peaceful haven where her tired spirit might find rest. During those two weary years of self-struggle she kept too careful a watch over herself ever to betray her secret to her sister, and the handsome Captain Hardy never guessed it. Accustomed to admiration, he accepted any marks of feminine regard as the ordinary homage to his fascinations; and his big-fiddle and court duties left him but little time to think about the feelings of his sister-in-law.

He might indeed have thought about them when he and his wife removed to Torquay and took the sister with them. For she had yielded to their desire that she would make her home with them; and she was thankful for an opportunity that should sever her connection with the gay life of Brighton, and should still keep her near to one to whom her love had been so unwittingly given. Her sister, with her new-born babe and ailing husband, was glad of her companionship and assistance in the housekeeping;

and so they all went together to Torquay; and during the last year of Captain Hardy's shattered life his young sister-in-law was his chief nurse.

This was the turning point in her life and the most eventful year in his. By slow and painful degrees she schooled him to a more sober and serious frame of mind than he had hitherto entertained. By gentle conversation rather than by dogmatic teaching she won him to think more and more of his present and past life, and of that future state which was so evidently dawning upon him. The gay and handsome man of fashion, removed from the scenes of his dissipation, and severed from the surroundings of a thoughtless if not heartless company, found himself, in his quiet Torquay home, dissassociated from his former career and his Pavilion friends as completely as the ascended aeronaut is cut off from the gazing throng; like him, too, soaring steadily from earthly sights and sounds, far above the intervening clouds and mists, to a serener sky and a region that seemed the confines of Heaven's gate.

This transformation was the good work of "the Fairy." She it was who directed the Captain's

thoughts to that new bourne, and piloted him thither with so much zeal and tact and self-devotion. She it was who taught the prayerless man to kneel and utter words that had not passed his lips since he had been a boy at his mother's knee. She it was who led him to the study of a Book that had hitherto been sealed to him, and from whose deep wells of consolation he now for the first time drew waters of comfort. She it was who soothed him in his dying moments, and her heart it was, even more than his wife's, that was buried in his grave. For her sister had still her boy to live for; but for the poor little Fairy, the one link that bound her to a loving life was snapped for ever. Miss O'Fay's heart was in Captain Hardy's grave.

Perhaps the young rector who was then visiting at Torquay, and had become enamoured of Miss O'Fay's lovely beauty no less than her quiet grace, had timed his proposal badly, when, eight months after the Captain's death, he asked her to plight her troth to him. The wound at any rate was too recent to be yet cicatrized; and the young rector met with a refusal. Six months afterwards he again visited Torquay and renewed

his offer. There was much to have suited her in the quiet useful life that he had offered her to share with him—the school-work, the cottage-visiting, and the other employments of a country clergyman's wife; but she would not give her hand without her heart, and she firmly and finally declined the rector's proposals.

And so she lived on, true to her first love and cherishing her heart's secret; and the former Beauty of Brighton, Fairy O'Fay, the Pavilion toast, passed into the debatable border-land of old-maidism. She pleaded hard to have the charge of her nephew, who grew up a fine lad, very like his handsome father; but she pleaded in vain, and his mother sent him to a public school. Then he had a year or two at Oxford, merely for the sake of its society, and with no intention of graduating; and then he married and settled in life ere he had barely attained his majority, and his aunt had but little sway over him, and only had his company at brief seasons.

It was not until the birth of his daughter Ella that Miss O'Fay could arouse herself to the enjoyment of a new lease of life, which had been freshly embittered by the death of her sister.

And when Ella Hardy was so unexpectedly left an orphan, whatever may have been her great-aunt's grief for the event, more especially for the altered circumstances to which the child had been so suddenly reduced, yet she could not repress a deep feeling of joy and gratitude that the child had been so providentially thrown upon her care. There were two other families of the Hardys, whose fathers had been brothers to Big-fiddle Hardy, either of whom would have taken little Ella into their own households and brought her up with their own children; but Miss O'Fay pleaded so hard to be permitted to have the guardianship of her great-niece—who had grown to be so in height as well as in relationship—that the girl was confided entirely to her care.

The aunt accepted her position as a second mother to the orphan with unfeigned gladness, and not without many an earnest prayer that they might prove a mutual blessing to each other. Her religious convictions had for some time settled down into a depth of solemn earnestness, that, in many natures, would have produced a Calvinistic sternness and gloom that would have repelled the young and light-hearted by its rigour and asceti-

cism. But the harsher shades of such a character had, in Miss O'Fay's case, been so toned down and softened by human love, that all that was repulsive was removed, and what remained merely lent depth and firmness and decision. She had passed through the school of suffering and had drunk of its bitter cup without being able to confide her sorrow to any earthly friend; and this her chastening had taught her to cast the burden of her grief where she had found, by wholesome experience, that she could best do so. Her former life, with its ceaseless round of gaiety, had, when her secret sorrow had come fully home to her, so impressed her with a sense of its worldliness and vanities, that the complete change from the one phase of her life to the other produced that reaction in her innermost feelings and system of thought, which would probably have led her to renounce the world for the cloister, had her faith been that of the Romanist. As it was, it carried her to the austere boundary of the severest school of Protestantism; and she regarded the development of what was conveniently termed Puseyism as something more to be feared than even Romanism itself.

The recoil from her former habits of thought and life had borne her beyond the safe line of moderation, and had led her to regard much that was simple and innocent as a vanity and worldly snare; although she did not go to the extreme of condemning everything that savoured of amusement as a trap baited by the evil one for the allurement and destruction of souls. Her principles would not permit her to enter a theatre, but would sanction her presence at a morning concert; and while she would attend bazaars and fancy fairs, provided only that they were held for the furtherance of her select charities, she taught her niece that public balls and assemblies were to be shunned as plague-spots. Her own experience of them in the Pavilion days of the Regency had indeed been such as would lead her to entertain such an opinion in the present state of her knowledge and religious opinions; and, from her peculiar platform, she could preach but one class of homily on this subject. Her niece accepted her schooling with the best temper and spirit, and neither sought to go to balls nor theatres, but made herself happy and contented in her own way.

Not, however, that Ella Hardy could bring herself to acquiesce implicitly in Miss O'Fay's religious views. Perhaps, in her anxiety to make her niece think with herself, the aunt had somewhat overdone her part; and the developing ideas of the young girl had refused to submit themselves to the theological strait-waistcoat that her senior would have imposed upon her. The carrying her off to Bible classes, mothers' meetings, Dorcas societies, and expositions by pet preachers, had not effected upon Miss Hardy that peculiar work for which Miss O'Fay had so especially designed them. The young lady gaped at the Bible classes, dubbed the mothers' meetings schools for scandal, yawned at the Dorcas societies, and drowsed at the expositions. She was incorrigible; but it was in a quiet and complacent way; and, as she never refused to accompany her aunt to these and the like gatherings, Miss O'Fay could only hope for the best, and assign Ella's shortcomings to the infirmities of the flesh and the cropping out of the original Adam. Of a mild and tender disposition herself, the aunt thought, that, in a matter so important, persuasion was better than force, and that if she set before her niece what she deemed

to be the right way, Ella would be disposed to walk in it.

It was, however, with no slight alarm that she observed in Ella a decided tendency to adopt certain notions that were accepted under the name of High Church, and which Miss O'Fay and her religious party regarded as a rightly-bestowed appellation, if the adjective were only taken in the sense in which it is used when coupled with tainted meat or game. The name stank in their nostrils, and that which was high they looked upon as diseased and corrupted. That Ella should have any appetite for such mental food evinced a fault in her taste that filled her aunt with grief and surprise. It betrayed an aberration from which she prayed that Ella might be restored, and she watched any evidence of the diseased fancy with fresh alarm and renewed supplications that her dear niece might be healed and brought to her right mind.

Miss O'Fay had never been at Brighton since the days when she had been its belle and toast, and had danced at the Pavilion with royalty. Sorely tempted had she often been to revisit the spot where she had first felt the full force of love;

and once more to recall the scenes in which the handsome equerry had been to her the central object of attraction. But she had put aside the temptation, and had resolutely foregone the melancholy satisfaction of revisiting a place so thronged with mingled memories of joy and sorrow; and when she and her niece visited the sea-side it was usually to Torquay that they turned their steps. There at least the poor stricken little Fairy could indulge in retrospections that were consecrated by the solemn glow that had irradiated the last days of one to whom she had given her all of love. There was a grave there that possessed more sad attraction for her than could be found in any other spot on earth.

When Ella Hardy had proposed their going to Brighton, and had urged her strong desire to see a place where her grandfather had once lived, and where her father had been born, Miss O'Fay felt that her own secret yearnings to revisit the spot might now be gratified; and she therefore agreed to Ella's proposition. She was the more induced to do so from the circumstance that her friend, Mrs. Grimsby Grout, was also going to sojourn at Brighton for a few weeks, and would there enter-

tain, during a portion of her visit, that esteemed minister, the Rev. Micaiah Mowle, of Clapham, under whom she had frequently sat with great delight, and not without profit. Miss O'Fay, for her own part, would be very pleased to have the privilege of once more meeting that esteemed pastor, and trusted that the opportunity might be blessed to her niece's spiritual gain.

And thus it had happened that Miss O'Fay's first visit to Brighton, since that bygone era when she had been accredited as the Beauty of Brighton, and the Fairy O'Fay of the Pavilion toasts, was when she came thither with her niece, Ella Hardy, and took those lodgings at 52, Cliff Place, immediately opposite to those rooms at Mrs. Harpeyden's which were shortly afterwards occupied by the Melladews.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE MORNING CALL.

EDGAR MELLADEW, as he sat by the side of Miss O'Fay and listened to the music of the town band, little thought that he was conversing with one who, in the palmiest days of Brighton's first fame, had been wont to bask in the sunshine of the royal favour, and had been one of the leading belles at all the routs and assemblies. He could see nothing more than a little lady with a mild look and a well-preserved countenance, who did not look her full age (which was sixty-two), and who was dressed in a quiet and lady-like but somewhat quakerish costume, totally innocent of crinoline, that in itself was a novelty in that gaily-bedizened throng of fancily-dressed ladies, who just at that period were in the fullest amplitude of the doomed crinoline. He could only see a plain,

meek little lady, who was calm and measured in her conversation, and was given to the occasional utterance of expressions and phrases that Edgar, without pausing to analyze their meaning, would have called "methodistical cant."

He could not have imagined that this mild little old lady had had her worldly triumphs in a court, some of whose members regarded loss of character as a less misfortune than loss of looks, and that she had lived through her own romance of love, and had had her own bitter sufferings, and had endured them with a brave heart, a patient smile, and an uncomplaining spirit. As little did he then suppose that she had ever thus played the true heroine's part as that she had once been toasted as the Beauty of Brighton. There came a time when he knew of this, and when he was told all of her history that she ever confided to a friend, but of which history the love that she had borne for Captain Hardy remained a secret locked within her own breast, and there to be carried with her to her grave. But from the few points in her career of which he was afterwards informed, he was enabled to weave a tolerably correct history, and his possession of it

mightily raised Miss O'Fay in his estimation. Young men like to know that a maiden aunt has been beautiful, and has reigned as a toast, and has had offers; it invests her with a new charm, like sunset to an old ruin, and it lends to her that one touch of nature that makes the whole world kin.

But, if Edgar Melladew had been now called upon to assign the *sobriquet* of "the Beauty of Brighton" to any one within that gay assembly that had thronged around the town-band, he would not have hesitated for a moment where to bestow it, but would have transmitted the name as an hereditary title from the great-aunt to her niece. In Ella Hardy's face the fine features of her grandfather, the handsome equerry, were reproduced with so forcible a likeness that Miss O'Fay would often sit and gaze upon her niece, and fall into day-dreams and memories that bore her back to the distant past, and to the side of one who never knew how greatly he was beloved.

"Mrs. Melladew, then, does not yet know Brighton?" said Miss O'Fay in reply to an observation that Edgar had made. "As we are such near neighbours, she must permit me to call

upon her. She may be anxious to know about the churches, and where she should go on Sundays, and I should have great pleasure in telling her my experience. It is so easy to go astray in a matter of this kind."

"It is, indeed," said Edgar, "for you may get into a crowded church and be obliged to stand during the service. And that would not suit my mother at all."

Miss O'Fay had not meant this, but she was too polite to set him right as to her meaning of going astray, especially as Edgar hastened to assure her that he was confident that his mother would be grateful for any help, and would be delighted to see her. He was glad, too, he said, that his sister had found an old friend in Miss Hardy, the more so as he had been afraid that she (his sister) might have found it somewhat dull at Brighton without any friends of her own age. He therefore deemed her especially fortunate that, on the first morning of her stay there, she had so soon met with Miss Galloway and Miss Hardy. Might he, as his mother's deputy, ask Miss O'Fay to lunch, or would she come across and call upon her mother after luncheon?

Miss O'Fay consented to the latter arrangement, and although Edgar did not venture to say a word as to Miss Hardy, he concluded that she would accompany her aunt as a matter of course. And then, as the band was playing the verse of the National Anthem that signalled the termination of their musical performance for that morning, the crowd began to disperse; and in the passing to and fro of the various animated atoms whose confluence had formed that crowd, Major and Mrs. Galloway were spied, and were introduced by their daughter to the Melladews, with whom Miss Galloway said she was going to lunch. Then they strolled on towards Cliff Place, Edgar walking with Miss O'Fay, and the three young ladies following them.

They had all become quite intimate by the time they had reached Cliff Place, and when, after luncheon, Miss O'Fay stepped across the road, accompanied by Miss Hardy, to make her call upon Mrs. Melladew, the two elderly ladies, being already disposed for friendliness, soon made themselves agreeable to each other, and struck upon certain chords of conversation that vibrated in perfect harmony. The merits of Mr. Vaughan,

Mr. Elliott, and a select few of the Brighton clergy, formed the chief theme of Miss O'Fay's discourse, Mr. Sand being more especially mentioned, and the privilege that it was to sit under his ministry.

Mrs. Melladew felt a particular interest in this subject. "I had been already mentioning it," she said, "to our landlady, Mrs. Harpeyden, who is a most respectable and superior person, and is, indeed, the grand-daughter of a rector and the great-niece of the Dean of St. Vitus's; and she had been speaking to me of St. Margaret's Chapel as being within a convenient distance; and I had thought that we would go there on Sunday. The only difficulty seems to be with regard to seats; but of course that would be the same everywhere, and we must take our chance like other visitors. Though it is certainly very disagreeable to be obliged to stand through a service and to be dreadfully crushed besides. We found it to be the case, I remember, at Scarboro'; and the last time that I was at the parish church there, I can assure you that I had my gown nearly torn from my back. The crowding was most disgraceful

and unseemly; and I am sorry to say the ladies were the worst offenders."

"I think," said Miss O'Fay, "that I can almost promise you two sittings, if not three; at any rate for the next two Sundays. Miss Trimmer, who keeps a school here, has several sittings at St. Margaret's; and as many of the young ladies are away just now, she very politely gave permission to my niece and myself to occupy one of her pews and to bring any of our friends."

"I think I heard you mention St. Margaret's Chapel, Miss O'Fay," said Miss Galloway. "I told you the other day that it looked for all the world like Brill's Baths. And this morning I found a spot in the King's Road, looking up an alley between Cannon Place and Regency Square, where you can see a something, which, I am sure, if you were not told that it was the crowning glory of a chapel, you would imagine that it was a rival to Brill's Baths. If you will believe me," she said, turning to Helen Melladew, "it has a large flattened dome in which are square-headed windows with venetian blinds."

"St. Paul's Cathedral has a dome," suggested Miss O'Fay.

"Yes; but not a thing like St. Margaret's, in the Brill's Baths' style," replied Miss Galloway.

"What can you expect from a proprietary chapel?" said Miss Hardy, quietly, with something like a sneer.

"Mr. Sand pays more than three hundred a year for its rental," explained Miss O'Fay to Mrs. Melladew; "and has only the pew-rents to meet all the other heavy expenses of the chapel and to pay his curate; and, unless he and his wife had private property, he would never be able to manage, with all the good that he does, and the large sums that he gives away in charities. But he knows that it is not given, but only lent," murmured the little lady, "and he has the assurance that his loan will be repaid with the true riches."

"I grant you," said Miss Galloway, "that Mr. Sand is a very charitable man, and does a great deal of good, and is very popular and sought after, and all that sort of thing; but he would be just as good in a building that looked more like a church than Brill's Baths."

"Some persons think," said Miss Hardy, but quietly, to her companion, Helen Melladew, "that what they term the Gospel is not to be found except in these unecclesiastical buildings. Though there is a better feeling abroad, and even the old-fashioned schism-shops—as a cousin of mine calls them—are proving themselves to be influenced by a perception of art, and are showing more and more their disbelief in their fathers' creed, that barn-like or box-like buildings, free from any attempt at structural beauty or ornamental detail, are best fitted for the service of the sanctuary: even the bigoted Scotch Presbyterians are allowing this, and have begun to look with a friendly eye on organs and stained glass. And you will see many evidences of this improved feeling here in Brighton."

"But you must allow, Miss Galloway," continued Miss O'Fay, while her niece and Helen were talking apart, "that Mr. Sand's chapel has been done up very nicely and at great expense, and has been made very comfortable."

"Well! I don't know about the comfort in this particular case," laughed Miss Galloway; "but, perhaps, it would be unreasonable to expect

that, with our superfluities of modern dress; though I should always look for comfort in a church, and to be as well cared for there as though I was in a theatre."

"But yet," said Miss O'Fay, "I think I have understood that at many theatres young ladies will sit through an evening's performance without any rest to their backs."

"Oh, Miss O'Fay! you must mean the galleries, I am sure," cried Miss Galloway; "or perhaps the pit. But not the pit-stalls, though; which are delicious, and the places I always choose." Here she received a poke from Miss Hardy's parasol, as a caution to her not to ramble any further on the forbidden ground.

"Nevertheless," said Miss O'Fay, "young ladies would stand and dance through the whole evening."

"Ah! but there you move about," rejoined Miss Galloway; "or you can sit on the stairs and flirt;" she added quietly, as she turned to Ella Hardy. Miss Galloway was incorrigible; and Miss O'Fay pursued her conversation with Mrs. Melladew, leaving the young people to their own devices.

"But just think how the interior of the chapel has been done up," said Miss Galloway; "I daresay you have not seen it, Mr. Melladew?"

"No, I have not. What is it like inside?"

"Imagine a large square room," replied Miss Galloway, "with a deep and what they call 'commodious' gallery, running round three sides of it, and a fourth little gallery perched up above the third on each side of the organ, where there are seats kept for fishermen, who often appear in the guise of gentlemen, and lady visitors. Of course the area of the chapel is blocked up with high pews, and overhead is the wonderful Brill's Bath dome."

"From which hangs a real corona," interposed Miss Hardy; "you must not forget that, although it is not of a very good pattern. But it is the only real ecclesiastical ornament in the chapel, unless it be the two lecterns."

"Well," continued Miss Galloway; "the walls are white, with shades of French grey and French white; and all around are pillars painted like Scagliola marble, with Corinthian capitals; and inside the dome is a circle of plaster wreaths.

Then, in front of the fourth wall, opposite to the organ, is the communion area coming out in a semicircle, with those two lecterns that Ella spoke of, which are covered with crimson velvet, and rise from the altar-rails, within which the clergymen stand to read the Prayers and Lessons; though, when they are not reading, they kneel or sit by the communion-table, where two very dining-room looking chairs are placed for them. Then comes the most wonderful part of the structure. Immediately over the communion-table, in place of a reredos or window, is a deep alcove, like to those made for statues, in front of which is a heavy balcony of plaster, partially draped by a semicircular sweep of crimson velvet. There is no visible means of access to this alcove; but when they are singing the hymn before the sermon, one of the panels at the back of the alcove mysteriously opens, and in steps a black-robed clergyman."

"Then the balcony is the pulpit?" said Edgar.

"Precisely," replied Miss Galloway; "and a very roomy one it seems to be—quite after the Spurgeon model. I must do Mr. Sand the justice to say that he delivers from his queer pulpit the

very best of sermons; even you must own that, Ella, although you run after the opposition people so much."

"I believe him to be a perfectly sincere and thoroughly excellent man," replied Miss Hardy; "and I have always been glad to hear him preach, although I do not by any means admire the place that he preaches in, nor many points in the conduct of the service. The repeating of the General Thanksgiving by the congregation I liked, although it is not usual; but there was no sort of authority for introducing into the Litany the words 'especially to the people of America,' in the supplication for unity and peace. Then the music is atrocious; especially their favourite polka tune chant; and of course there are all the hymn tunes of the class represented by Mozart's 'Belmont.'"

"Oh, but that is so pretty!" said Helen Melladew. "We often have it at our church. Mr. Pordage, our rector, is very fond of it. And his curate also," she said to herself.

"But," said Miss Hardy, "since it has been secularized to such a theme as the 'Ratcatcher's Daughter,' it would be better to give it over to

the ballad-singers and choose some other tune—out of 'Hymns Ancient and Modern,' for instance. Then the altar is due west, so that the real north side of the table is to the south; and when the curate reads the first part of the Communion Service from the south, as he did last Sunday, he was unconsciously obeying the rubric. The orientation has evidently not concerned the architect of St. Margaret's."

"What on earth is orientation?" asked Miss Galloway.

"When the church is properly built, with its nave and chancel due east and west," explained Miss Hardy, "the chancel being sometimes deflected slightly according to the sun's rising on the saint's day in whose name the church has been built."

"An old friend of papa's," said Miss Galloway, "who is a Fellow of the Antiquarian Society, and is always poking about in old churches, looked at our church the other day, and amused me by pointing out a funny hole in the wall, just on one side the chancel-arch, and telling me that our church had the most interesting squint he had ever seen. And I suppose that what you

call deflection must also be when a church has got a squint."

Miss Hardy seemed somewhat scandalized at so serious a matter being treated with anything savouring of levity; though she merely shook her head and said, with a faint smile, "Kitty, you know better than that. If you don't, you ought to read Bloxam."

"Willingly, my dear, if it's a novel," said Miss Galloway, who clearly was incorrigible.

"St. Margaret's is not the only Brighton offender against orientation," said Edgar. "When I was here last, I went once to Dr. O'Lion's church; I forget the name of the saint to whom it is dedicated."

"St. James," said Miss Hardy; and then quietly added, by way of correction to Edgar's speech, "dedicated to God in the name of St. James."

"Yes, St. James's, Hove; a large and handsome church, but terribly hidden by being built in among a range of houses. I had to give eighteenpence to secure my sitting."

"Like taking a ticket for a reserved seat at a concert," suggested Miss Galloway.

"The sittings are all free in the evening," said Miss Hardy, coming to the rescue; "and if the offertory was established it could be claimed by the Vicar of Hove; so that something must be charged for sittings, though, if any visitor likes to take his chance for an unsecured sitting, he can do so by putting a donation into the alms-box, which you are expected to do at St. Margaret's, and everywhere else in Brighton where the offertory has not been established. Dr. O'Lion spent nearly twenty thousand pounds over his church, and he has two and sometimes three curates; so that there are heavy expenses connected with St. James's. But I am interrupting you, Mr. Melladew; I think you were about to speak of the position of the altar in that church?"

"Which, I perceive, you have already noticed," replied Edgar. "It stands due north; nevertheless the clergy and the surpliced choir face round to it during the Creed; which, clearly, is turning to the altar, and not turning to the east. St. Peter's also stands north and south, thus bringing the communion-table to the north instead of to the east. But I suppose that Barry sacrificed it to

its position; which was a pity, for it is far superior to the generality of George the Fourth churches. Don't you think so?"

"I do," replied Miss Hardy; "we went there with Major Galloway last Sunday evening, and I thought that if the interior could be entirely swept out and remodelled, it might be made to look very ecclesiastical."

"That's what I call a sweeping proposition," laughed Miss Galloway; "and when it was swept I suppose you would have it garnished, like St. Paul's." But Miss Hardy did not hear this, for she was speaking to Edgar.

"My measures would certainly be sweeping," she said, "so far as all the pews are concerned, and I should also like to take away the side-galleries that cut the aisle windows; though the organ gallery might be left, although the organ stands on a very queer-looking box. Then there are the two great erections for the prayer-desk and pulpit in front of the altar-rails, and the tall desk for the clerk—they would need alteration. And the font would have to be removed from its present position outside the altar-rails to its proper place

at the west end. The two large gilt chandeliers hanging from the roof are more adapted for a music-room; and I daresay that the ornamentation of the woodwork is cast-iron; but the general effect of the interior, with these exceptions, is very good,—the real stonework, with the clustered pillars, Gothic arches, groined roof, and apse with its three fine lights, although the screen is taken straight across the apse, and the vestry is constructed behind the altar, as is so commonly the case with those Georgian churches."

"The whole effect of the exterior is very good," said Edgar, "surrounded as the church is by the trees and verdure that are so rare in Brighton. And I think that the best view of it is when you come into Brighton through the avenue on the Lewes road, and see St. Peter's straight before you, standing broadside on, as it were, along the farther end of the road, embedded in foliage."

"Trinity Chapel, in Ship Street," continued Miss Hardy, "is another of the Brighton churches where the altar is due north; and there, too, the

rostrum for the prayer-desk is immediately in front of the altar-rails, and is painted white with a gilt cross, and stands upon Doric columns. With its great galleries and high pews, it is certainly a singular-looking church."

"And yet," said Edgar, "I suppose that in Mr. Robertson's time there was no more popular church in Brighton. I heard him more than once, and he shone to greater advantage when he was heard than when he is read. His published sermons lose much of their effect when disassociated from the beautiful delivery and earnest manner of their preacher."

"Great attention is now paid there to the musical portion of the service," said Miss Hardy, "and a surpliced choir occupy the two front rows of the organ-gallery. Its incumbent is one of the many clergy who have published a selection of psalms and hymns, and he is a very forcible preacher."

A thundering clatter of horses charging up the street drowned Miss Hardy's voice, and by attracting the attention of the four who were seated near to the open bow-window of Mrs.

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